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GREAT MALVERN PRIORY CHURCH

BY THE REV. CANON ANTHONY DEANE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLAN

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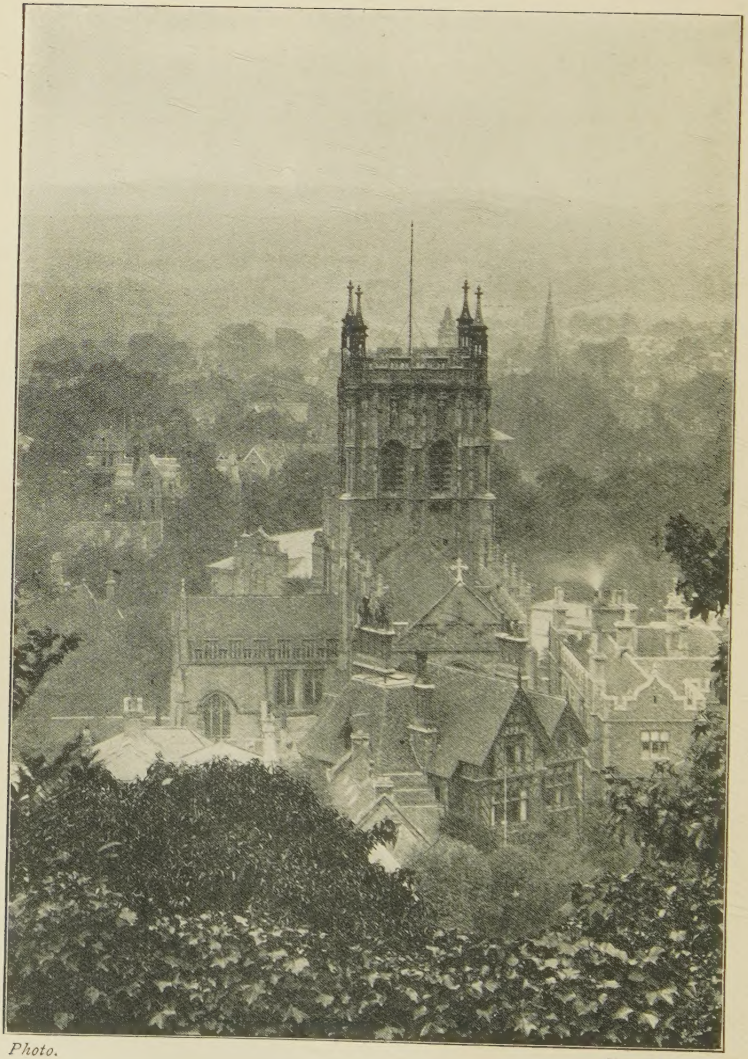

Photo. *Harold Baker.*

MALVERN PRIORY CHURCH FROM THE WEST

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF GREAT MALVERN PRIORY CHURCH

A HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY, AND DESCRIPTION OF THE FABRIC, WITH A CHAPTER ON THE ANCIENT GLASS & TILES

BY THE

REV. ANTHONY CHARLES DEANE, M.A.

VICAR OF HAMPSTEAD AND HON. CANON OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL;
SOMETIME VICAR OF MALVERN

WITH XLII ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

I AM ashamed to think for how many years this volume has been announced as "in preparation." Small, however, as it is, the task of gathering material for it has been not light. The historical chapter, in particular, necessitated much research. Of guide-books to Malvern and its church there are many, but they show that characteristic weakness of their tribe—a readiness to make dubious historical statements upon no real authority, and a tendency to repeat, without inquiry, each other's inaccuracies. I cannot hope that my historical chapter is free from errors, but I trust that, being equipped with references, it may prove of service to later students travelling along the same road.

Most valuable assistance has been given me from many quarters. I am indebted to, among others, Dr. M. R. James, Mr. G. McN. Rushforth (who is preparing, I am glad to know, a monograph on the Priory's ancient glass), Dr. Armitage Robinson, Mr. J. W. Willis Bund, Mr. F. Bligh Bond, Mr. A. Troyte Griffith, Mrs. Way, and (by no means least) my colleague the Rev. J. E. H. Blake. The photographs of the church are mostly the skilled work of my friend the Rev. Dr. Hermitage Day. Those of the misericords, and some others, were taken for me by kind helpers who wish to be unnamed.

I end this little book during my last weeks as Vicar of the

church described in it, and I wish to dedicate it to the peopl
of Malvern as a small return for innumerable kindnesses. T
have lived among them and to have shared with them the privi
lege of worshipping in their beautiful church is to have gained
a store of happy and enduring memories.

A. C. D.

Malvern Vicarage
All Saints' Day, 1913

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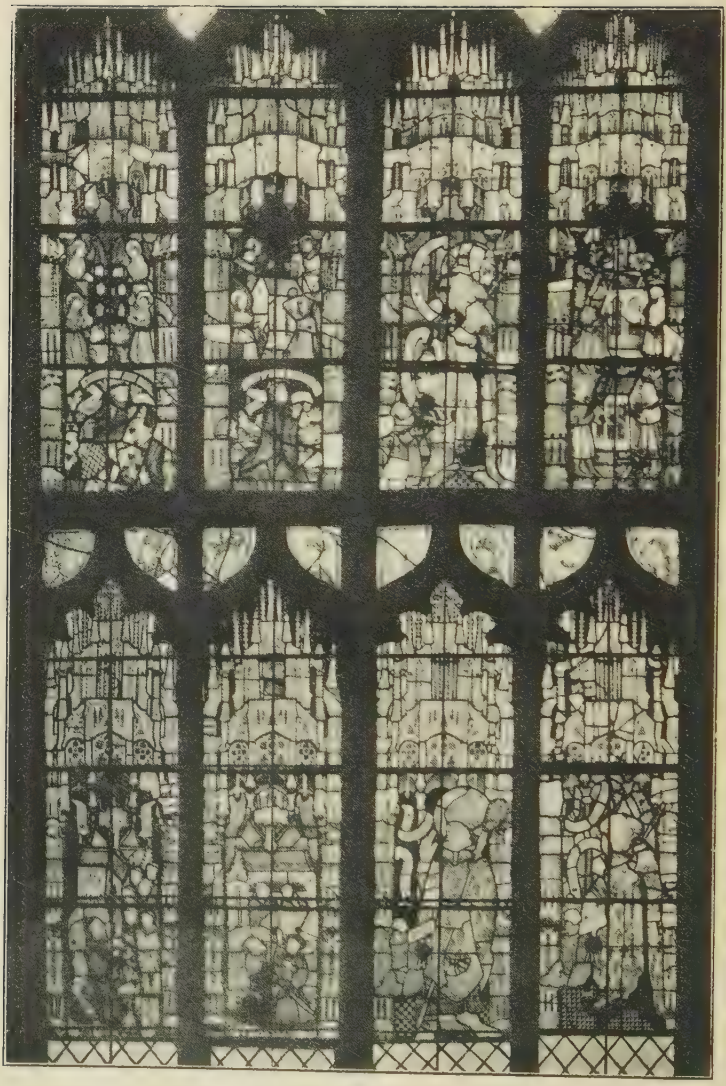


THE WERSTAN AND ALDWIN WINDOW

THE PRIORY CHURCH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

From an old engraving

GREAT MALVERN PRIORY CHURCH

CHAPTER I

HISTORY

THE origin of the first Church settlement in Malvern, "that vast wilderness" as William of Malmesbury termed it,[1] is not easy to trace. Accounts of it are supplied by various early chronicles, but they are incapable of reconciliation one with another, and the authentic history they contain cannot be disentangled readily from legend. Later writers have been satisfied, for the most part, with bringing together incoherently any statements made by any predecessor, without attempting to verify their accuracy or to harmonize their contradictions. We may

[1] Writing *circa* 1123, *Gest. Pontif.* (Rolls Series), 285.

begin, therefore, by summarizing the various traditions, and by noting the evidence which can be found for their support.

1. About the middle of the fifteenth century the monks of Great Malvern Priory pictured the origin of their House in a window of the church. It is the westernmost of those in the north clerestory of the choir: the most exquisite, perhaps, of a beautiful series. The window contains eight lights. Those beneath the transom represent scenes in the life of Aldwin, the first Prior; to these we will return later. Our immediate concern is with the upper four. In the first (beginning at the spectator's left hand) we see four angels consecrating a plot of ground.[1] In the second they dedicate a chapel.[2] Beneath each of these pictures kneels a figure in hermit's garb, with the scroll "Sanctus Werstanus," to which, in the first case, "Martir" is added. The third light shows us the large figure of a king, identified by the words "Sanctus Edwardus Rex," presenting a sealed charter to a small kneeling ecclesiastic, labelled "Willm'." Edwardus." In the fourth light is a scene of martyrdom. From the chapel window a man's head protrudes; two executioners are in the act of striking it with large two-handed swords. Immediately beneath this picture is one in which three singing-clerks, with books in their hands, appear at the windows of a small chapel. Outside it stand two men carrying bundles of rods; they are attired, like the executioners above, in the coif and dress conventionally used to depict "tormentors."

To three of these pictures a clue is supplied by John Leland, who visited Malvern some sixteen years before the dissolution

[1] There are four white flowers upon it, and in the centre (partly hidden from view by a stanchion) a large white key. The Malvern hills form the background. At the corners are white boundary-stones or posts, upon which the angels rest their hands.

[2] One holds a cross, another an aspergillum, the third a thurible, the fourth touches the chapel-bell. The right hands of all four are raised in benediction. (The head of the uppermost angel on the left side is an insertion.)

[3] The juxtaposition of these two Christian names on the scroll is puzzling. Neither portion of the scroll seems to be a later insertion, yet both names could not have been given at this period to one man. Is this scroll intended to describe the complete picture—the meeting of William (presumably an associate of Werstan's) and Edward, while the full title of the latter, for which space was lacking on the lower scroll, is repeated above? The garb of the smaller figure is certainly not monastic; it seems most probable that, as suggested, he is one of Werstan's companions.

of the Priory, and doubtless obtained his information from its monks. In his *Itinerary* he mentions an abbey at Deerhurst, the reputed predecessor of a later foundation there, and adds: "It was destroyed by the Danes. Werstanus fledde thens, as it is sayde, to Malverne." Again, in his *Collectanea* he states that St. Werstan suffered martyrdom in a chapel which stands near the Priory, and is dedicated to St. John the Baptist.[1] Here, then, is one tradition as to the beginning of Malvern's ecclesiastical history—that this St. Werstan fled to the neighbourhood when his own Abbey of Deerhurst, some eighteen miles distant, had been sacked by the Danes; that, guided by angels, he chose a site at Malvern and built a chapel upon it, and that in this chapel he was attacked once more, and there beheaded. From his martyrdom the spot would acquire sanctity, and would be an appropriate neighbourhood for the Benedictine house founded by Aldwin after the Conquest.

That there was an ancient chapel westward of the Priory and on the side of the hill is beyond question. But its dedication appears to have been to St. Michael, not, as Leland states, to St. John Baptist. A representation of it was contained in one of the Priory windows, now destroyed, but described by Dr. Thomas in 1725,[2] and its position as "S. Michael's Chapel" is shown on a map of the same date. In the early years of the nineteenth century a cottage standing on this ground was known as "The Hermitage," and when it was destroyed, about 1825, to make room for a modern house, beneath it were found a small crypt, human bones, fragments of ashlar, and fifteenth-century encaustic tiles similar to those in the Priory church. This discovery led that excellent antiquary, Mr. Albert Way, to write: "Here, then, it may be credibly supposed that the simple oratory of St. Werstan stood."[3] We may remark, however, that ashlar and tiles of the fifteenth century scarcely indicate the site of a hermitage made, if Leland's story be true, in the time of the Danish invasions. The existence of a hermitage is one thing, the authenticity of the Werstan story quite another. Not

[1] *Collect.*, i, 65. "Capella S. Johannis Baptiste vicina prioratui, ubi S. Werstanus martyrium pertulit."

[2] "In tertia panella sunt villa et ecclesia de Malverne, et capella sancti Michaelis in latere montis sita."—*Descriptio Ecclesiae Majoris Malverne*, p. 21.

[3] He is followed by J. Nott (*The Church and Monastery of Great Malvern*) and most of the guide-books.

one of the older documents, in all their varying accounts of Malvern's foundation, so much as mention Werstan. Extensive search has failed to discover his name in any English Kalendar. It is not to be found except in this fifteenth-century window and Leland's sixteenth-century books.[1] But the strongest evidence against the story is the fact that chroniclers of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries know nothing of it, although they profess to describe the origin of the Malvern House. With considerable reluctance, one is compelled to regard the tale as a legend of the fifteenth century.

2. A second account of the foundation is given, in the course of some legal proceedings, by a prior of the year 1318. He affirms that there was a hermitage at Malvern in pre-Conquest times, and that the Priory was founded by Urse d'Abitot, in which afterwards, with his consent, a prior and monks were placed by an abbot of Westminster.[2] The first part of this statement, as to a settlement before the Conquest, agrees with other versions. Charters of Henry I confirm gifts made by Edward the Confessor, who is pictured as a benefactor in the church window already described.[3] But the Henry I charters make no mention of Urse d'Abitot, his name is not found in any other account, and it is as the ruthless pillager of convents rather than as a founder of them that he is known to history.

3. Another version of the story is found in the Register of Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester. An entry of the year 1283[4] states that in the time of St. Edward a hermit named Aldwin dwelt at a place where now the Priory of Great Malvern is situated, who afterwards was granted the site of the Priory by Hudde, Earl of Gloucester; later, the same hermit made the priory subject to the Abbot of Westminster for the time being. According to this account, and also that which next will

[1] Even Leland's phrase "Werstanus fledde thens, *as it is sayde*, to Malverne" seems to indicate a certain degree of scepticism.

[2] *Abbrev. Plac.* 331. "Prior dicit, quod prioratus majoris Malverne aliquo tempore ante conquestum fuit quoddam heremitorium, de fundatione Ursonis d' Abitot fundatum, et postmodum quidam abbas Westmonasterii, predecessor abbatis nunc, de assensu ipsius Ursonis, constituit ibidem quemdam priorem et monachos."

[3] The Winchester *Annal. Mon.* (Rolls Series), ii, 10, state that the body of St. Edburga, daughter of the Confessor, is buried in the New Minster of Winchester, "*licet monachi de Malverna se falso jactitent illud habere.*"

[4] *Epis. Reg.*, Giffard, fol. 157 (1283).

be quoted, Aldwin, the first prior, was himself the hermit of pre-Conquest times. The only difficulty in the way of accepting this statement is the fact that Matthew Paris[1] records Aldwin's death as occurring in 1140. Healthy as the climate of Malvern is, and doubtless was, there is some unlikelihood that the hermit of Edward the Confessor's days survived till 1140. But, as Aldwin's successor as prior died in 1125, Matthew Paris is probably wrong.

4. Yet earlier is the narrative of William of Malmesbury.[2] He tells us that Aldwin, with a single companion, Guy, lived in the wilderness of Malvern. They proposed to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, that they might "either see the tomb of our Lord, or perish happily by the hand of the Saracens." They were dissuaded by Wulfstan—the Bishop of Worcester who, alone of Saxon bishops, retained his office after the Conquest. Wulfstan bade Aldwin remain at Malvern, where God would work great things for him. This prediction was fulfilled. One hermit after another joined Aldwin until they numbered thirty.[3]

To these accounts should be added the succinct statement of the Worcester *Monastic Annals*, that in the year 1085 the Priory of Great Malvern was founded by Aldwin, a monk. The early character of the Norman work in the church is consistent with this date, and if the Priory had been in existence before 1085, it would have been mentioned, we may suppose, in Domesday Book, where it does not occur. But, comparing the accounts summarized above, it seems safe to conclude that there was some kind of a religious settlement in the neighbourhood in the days of Edward the Confessor, that this formed the nucleus, so to speak, of the Priory, and that Aldwin, the first Prior, had previously been the head of the earlier community. The wish to erect the larger foundation near the site of the hermitage would account for its position, which must

[1] *Chron. Majora* (Rolls Series), ii, 174.

[2] *Gesta Pontif.*, 285, 286.

[3] "Alter post unum, tertius post alterum, ad tricenarium numerum." So also Higden's *Polychron.* (Rolls Series, vii, 376), following William of Malmesbury, has "congregavit triginta monachos." Habington, writing in the time of Charles I, changed "30" into "300." At the end of the eighteenth century Nash's *Worcestershire* copied Habington's blunder. A number of later books took over the mistake from Nash, including the Victoria County History (*Worcestershire*, ii, 137).

have been inconvenient, some 450 feet above the sea-level, and several miles from the nearest water-way.

As the records already quoted imply, the House of Great Malvern was attached, either at the time of its foundation or shortly afterwards, to the Abbey of Westminster, and it is natural to ask how a connection between places so distant arose. Mr. J. W. Willis Bund[1] explains it as follows: "In some way a large part of the Abbey of Pershore had come into the king's hands about the time of the foundation of Westminster. The inconvenience was felt that there was no house on the Abbey estates, so in 1085 a monastery, the Priory of Great Malvern, was erected by Westminster on its Worcester lands." But this view cannot be accepted without modification, unless we are prepared to throw over the Aldwin story, and, indeed, all the early chronicles. The more probable course of events seems that the monastery was erected at Malvern, or was at least about to be erected, independently of Westminster, and that then the Abbey, doubtless for the reason suggested by Mr. Willis Bund, seized the opportunity of establishing relations with it. Among the benefactions to Malvern confirmed by the charters of Henry I are some given by "Gislebertus, abbas Westmonasterii," *i.e.*, Gilbert Crispin, the great abbot who held office *circa* 1085-1117. It may reasonably be supposed that his gifts were made in return for Malvern's consent to become a cell of Westminster.[2]

Such as arrangement, as Mr. Willis Bund shows, was highly convenient for Westminster, but it proved at least as advantageous to Malvern. On the one hand, the great abbey was a powerful ally when Bishops of Worcester became troublesome. On the other hand, it was so remote that it could not weaken the Prior's authority by frequent interference in domestic matters. In emergencies the connection with the mother-house was emphasized, at other times it was practically ignored. More than once – and notably in a fierce dispute which raged towards the end of the thirteenth century – a bishop attempting to exercise visitatorial rights over Malvern found himself

[1] Introduction to *Episcopal Registers* (Worc. Hist. Soc.), p. xlii.

[2] It was a pleasure to find, after writing the above, that this view has the support of Dr. Armitage Robinson. His words are: "Abbot Gilbert's benefaction probably belongs to the moment of the attachment of the Priory to Westminster." *Life of Gilbert Crispin* (Camb. Press, 1911), p. 34.

opposed by all the power of Westminster. Yet Malvern was able clearly to define the limits of its subservience to the mother-house, as is shown by an agreement which an abbot of Westminster had to sign.[1] It stipulated that the choice of a prior, on the occurrence of a vacancy, was to be made by the Malvern chapter,[2] though their nominee was to be confirmed by the abbot. Again, the abbot might not remove any monk from Malvern save with the chapter's consent. He might not visit the Priory more than once a year, or stay longer than two days, or bring more than twenty horsemen as his escort. Having gained such points as these, the Malvern convent was well content with its relationship to so important an Abbey, and it continued to be a cell of Westminster until Abbey and Priory were alike dissolved.[3]

Such is the early history of the House. It was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin and St. Michael; the name "Great Malvern" –"Moche Malverne" in Middle English; Latinized indifferently as "Magna" and "Major Malvernia"—distinguished it from "Little Malvern" Priory, a cell of Worcester, founded in 1171. Although its wealth was small in comparison with the chief Benedictine houses, yet Great Malvern obtained by gift a large number of possessions, scattered over a considerable area. Four early benefactions are recorded in the window already mentioned in connection with the Werstan story. In three of the four lights below the transom Aldwin appears, identified in each case by a scroll with the words "Magister Aldewinus." In the first he and his monks, at the entrance of the monastery, are receiving a grant from "Osbernus Pontius";[4]

[1] About 1217. (Cott. MS. Faust. A. iii, 276).

[2] Dr. Armitage Robinson (*Gilbert Crispin*, 34) contrasts this with the procedure at Hurley, a priory of Westminster founded about the same time as Malvern. "Its prior was chosen from among the senior monks of Westminster: sometimes he returned after a period of service."

[3] In many books and prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the church is described as "Malvern Abbey," and there are still an "Abbey Road" and "Abbey Hotel" in its neighbourhood. But they are simply due to the ignorance of an age in which the distinction between an Abbey and a Priory had been forgotten.

[4] Described in the Henry I charters as "Osbertus filius Pontii" = Osbert Fitzpons. Among his gifts was a fishery "Above the Severn" at Longney, in Gloucestershire, with its keepers and their land. "Et concedo eis piscariam desuper Savernam, quae pertinet terrae Lungedeniae, cum hominibus et terra eorum qui custodiunt, sicut Osbertus filius Pontii eis eam

in the second William, Earl of Gloucester,[1] and Bernard, Earl of Hereford, have given charters which lie on a table behind them; two monks are in the background. In the third and fourth we see Aldwin taking sealed charters from the hands of Bishop Wulfstan and William the Conqueror.[2]

In addition to confirming earlier gifts, Henry I added others of his own. Within a space of time comparatively short, the convent had acquired property in Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Buckinghamshire, and Carmarthenshire. In 1159 a cell of Great Malvern, for four monks, was founded at Alvecote, in Warwickshire; there appears to have been another cell in the parish of Colwall, Herefordshire. During the thirteenth and the early years of the fourteenth century Great Malvern, in common with most of the religious houses, suffered a considerable loss of income; in common with others also, it attempted to retrieve that loss by impropriating the tithes of parish churches. For this the bishop's consent was necessary, and in giving it he was required to cite the reasons urged by the petitioners. As quoted by Bishop Maidstone of Worcester, in sanctioning the appropriation of Powyke to Great Malvern,[3] the monks state that they have been deprived of two churches and a manor in Wales, a prebend of St. David's, the manors of Folford and Knightwick, and the parish church (*i.e.*, the advowson only in this case) of Pitchcote, in Buckinghamshire. All these, they say, have been taken from them by deceit, cunning, or their own remissness; though war, both in Wales and England, has had its part. Their loss of revenue makes it almost impossible for them to maintain, as heretofore, twenty-six[4] monks and thirty poor men, in addition to discharging the duties of hospitality.

Whether the Welsh possessions, bestowed before Edward I's

dedit et concessit." *Pat.* 50 *Ed. III par.* 1, *m.* 15 *per inspeximus*, quoted at length by Thomas, *Chartae Orig.*, 182. The other Henry I charter is given by Dugdale, *Mon.*, iii, 448.

[1] Who perhaps is depicted at the moment of ratifying the conveyance as his act and deed, for his hand rests upon the seal.

[2] "Primus Rex An." The rest of the lettering is an insertion.

[3] In 1314. *Ep. Reg. Maidstone*, 16d.

[4] By the middle of the fifteenth century, to judge from the choir-stalls dating from that period, the number had been reduced from 26 to 24. At the Dissolution 10 monks (including the prior) appear on the pension-list. But in many houses pensions were not awarded to all the monks.

campaign, had ever been of substantial value seems doubtful. The manor of Knightwick had been ceded, thirty years before this petition, to the Bishops of Worcester, in return for permanent exemption from their visitation. Some boldness must have been needed to name this manor as lost "fraude, dolo, vel culpa." The advowson of Pitchcote had been the subject of a law-suit in 1311, a full account of which, in legal Norman,[1] survives. Its bewildered reader will sympathize with the complaint of the presiding judge that he had "never seen a case of 'last presentment' so badly pleaded."[2] In the upshot, however, the prior of Malvern lost the day.

Other causes tending to impoverish this convent need not be dealt with in detail here, belonging as they do to the history of the English monasteries in general rather than of Malvern in particular. Such were the "Black Death" of 1348-9, with the profound social changes it caused; the increase of taxation, with a decrease of benefactions; the system of "corrodies" and pensions[3] made chargeable upon the revenues of the House: the growing expense of entertaining guests. For its hospitality, indeed, Great Malvern seems to have had a high reputation through a considerable part of its existence. The noble timbered guest-house, erected about 1400, and barbarously destroyed as lately as 1841, was of striking dimensions. And the latest prior of all was praised by so unbiassed a witness as Bishop Latimer for "the virtue of hospitality, to which he has been greatly inclined since his beginning, and is much commended in these parts for the same." Despite, however, its poverty in the fourteenth century, Great Malvern was able to reconstruct its church sumptuously in the century which followed. Apart from its incomes from impropriated parishes and its share in the general improvement of economic conditions, we may suppose that the Malvern exchequer derived considerable profit through a local industry. This was the manufacture of mural

[1] "Great Malvern" is rendered "Grand Malum"—*De Banco Rolls, Mich.* 4 *Ed. II.*, *No.* 183, 2, 212, *Bucks.*

[2] "Jeo ne vy unges dreyn presentement si malement pledé."

[3] A "corrody" was an allowance for board; a pension, a cash payment. Sometimes they were granted in return for loans; at others they were imposed by the crown. Edward II, for example, demanded that a cook who had left the royal service should be permanently housed and fed in the monastery of Great Malvern. The house was liable for twenty-five corrodies and pensions at the Dissolution.

and floor encaustic tiles. Of these more than 1,000 are still within the church. Some are dated 1453, others 1456, and the great majority of the rest belong to the same period. Tiles from the Malvern kilns seem to have been purchased by a large number of churches, scattered over a considerable area. One of the kilns was discovered about 1830 on land belonging to the Priory; it was 35 feet in length, and was buried 7 feet below the surface of the ground.[1] At the time of the Dissolution the Priory's income was £375—which, of course, has to be multiplied by about twelve to obtain the equivalent value in modern money.

As the monastery developed, a village began to grow up around it, and a parish church was built on what is now the site of the post-office, at the north-west angle of the churchyard. The first vicar of Malvern was appointed in 1269. The church was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Almost all the books which mention it describe the dedication as to "St. Thomas the Apostle,"[2] but there can be no doubt that this is a mistake. The former dedication is quoted in early charters, while as late as 1537 the full description is given in a will: "the parish church of the Blessed Martyr St. Thomas of Canterbury at Moche Malvern." Twelve months later Henry VIII had declared Becket to be a traitor, and ordered his name to be expunged from all service-books. Conceivably, therefore, the church's dedication was changed to that of St. Thomas the Apostle for the short period 1538-1541, but from 1269 to 1537 it certainly bore the name of St. Thomas of Canterbury. In 1541 the Priory church of St. Mary and St. Michael was made the parish church; the other building was allowed to decay. In 1725 its ruins were still visible,[3] and measurements taken from them at that time record that the church had been 90 feet long and 36 in breadth, with one small chapel on the south.[4] Certain portions of land in the neighbourhood were held by the church of St. Thomas independently of the monastic possessions, although its tithes were impropriated to the convent. Charters relating to these lands, ranging in date from Edward III to

[1] Card, *Antiquities of the Priory of Great Malvern* (1834), p. 53.

[2] *E.g.* Thomas (1725), Chambers (1823), Card (1834), Nott (1885), and many others.

[3] Thomas, *Descriptio Eccl. Maj. Malv.*, p. 1.

[4] *Ibid.*

Elizabeth, were recently rediscovered, and are now to be seen in the porch-room of the Priory church.

Malvern's connection with Westminster was the cause of frequent disputes as to visitatorial rights; on the one hand, successive bishops of Worcester claimed to visit in virtue of their diocesan authority; on the other hand, Westminster asserted that the Priory was subject only to the abbot of its mother-house, and that the bishop had no jurisdiction therein. A "privilege" bearing the name of Adrian IV, was cited as confirming the claims of Westminster. This Pope, it will be remembered, who held office 1154-1159, was an Englishman by birth, and the document may have been authentic. On the other hand, such papal privileges seem to have been forged with considerable freedom by English monasteries. Through the twelfth and the earlier half of the thirteenth century quarrels between abbots of Westminster and bishops of Worcester concerning Great Malvern Priory appear to have been frequent. Bishop Giffard, in 1283, claims that both he and his predecessors "ab antiquo" have visited freely, and cites examples to illustrate his contention. Obviously, however, his evidence must be received with caution. All that can safely be said is that disputes had arisen on many occasions, and that sometimes the bishop and at other times the abbot had been victorious. By 1279 a kind of working compromise seemed to have been reached. In that year the chapter of Malvern, in accordance with ancient usage, chose a prior—William de Ledbury—from its own members, the appointment being ratified, in the normal way, by the abbot of Westminster. Then, as a sop to the bishop, a notification of the election was sent to him.[1]

William of Ledbury, however, was a man of profligate character, who utilized the revenues of the convent to pay for his debaucheries. Within three years of his election his rule had become intolerable to the monks. An appeal to Westminster against him might have provoked the retort: "By your own showing you are unfit to choose your prior. Why did you elect such a man?" Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, who was much nearer, would welcome the opportunity of asserting his claim

[1] *Reg. Epis. Giffard* (1283), f. 168, 2. The references throughout this dispute will be found in Bishop Giffard's Register, an epitome of which is issued by the Worcester Historical Society.

to visit the monastery, and had shown himself a zealous reformer. By the request of the monks, then, as it seems, Giffard came, formally deposed William of Ledbury, and encouraged the chapter to elect a new prior, William of Wykewane[1] in his place.[2] Thereafter the new prior, attended by some other inmates of the house, journeyed to London in order that his appointment should be ratified by Richard Ware, the abbot of Westminster. He arrived at a singularly unfortunate moment. The smouldering antagonism throughout the country between the diocesan and the monastic systems had been fanned into flame by the vigorous attempts of Archbishop Peckham, and of other bishops at his instigation, to assert their episcopal prerogative. In this same year—1282—the monks of Beverley had used force to prevent their diocesan from occupying the minster pulpit. There had been a fierce altercation between Peckham and the monks of Canterbury. In the previous year the abbot of Westminster had ignored the primate's summons to appear at the Council of Lambeth. Peckham had replied by an order for the sequestration of all impropriated churches belonging to the Abbey. The Malvern affair gave the abbot of Westminster an opportunity for reprisals. William of Ledbury's character was a neglected factor throughout the dispute. What concerned Westminster was that a bishop, on his own authority, had deposed a prior duly confirmed by Westminster, and had encouraged the monks to nominate another. No sooner, therefore, had the unsuspicious William de Wykewane and his companions reached Westminster than they were arrested by the abbot's orders, heavily manacled, and flung into prison.[3]

To describe in detail the controversy that followed would require more space than can be afforded here.[4] Among those drawn into the fray were the king (Edward I) who, in the main, sided with the abbot; the Archbishop of Canterbury, who strenuously supported the bishop; the Pope, the dowager Queen Eleanor, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Cardinal Hugh

[1] Another "William Wickwaine" had become Archbishop of York two years earlier.

[2] *Op. cit.*, f. 157, d.

[3] *Ib.*, f. 163.

[4] Ninety-six of the documents relating to it—letters, excommunications, summonses, etc., are given in full by Thomas. The story of the dispute is admirably told in the *Victoria County History* (Worcs., vol. ii, p. 138, *et seq.*).

of Evesham, Antony Bec of Durham, and many others. Giffard seized the temporalities of the Priory. The king ordered the sheriff of Worcester to expel the bishop's official. The Archbishop peremptorily demanded the immediate release of Wykewane and his companions. The abbot replied by increasing the rigour of their confinement to such a degree that one of the prisoners died. Bishop Giffard cited the abbot of Westminster to appear before him at Tewkesbury, a summons which was ignored. He launched also one excommunication after another against the monks, the laymen who supported them, and the sheriff's officers. Subsequently he placed under an interdict not only Great Malvern, but all the towns, monasteries, churches and chapels in his diocese owing allegiance to the abbot of Westminster. The king interfered to raise the interdict. Archbishop Peckham journeyed to Malvern in order to hold a visitation, but proctors from Westminster were before him and resisted his claims. So the quarrel raged, and throughout it Wykewane and his associates were kept in prison. Finally, in the autumn of 1283, the king took vigorous measures to effect a settlement. Giffard had to resign, in the most explicit terms,[1] his assertion of jurisdiction over Great Malvern Priory. The Priory ceded to him, by way of compensation, its manor of Knightwick.[2] Wykewane was released; portions of his tombstone (undated) are now within the Priory church. And—most discreditable feature of the settlement- William of Ledbury, of whose character no defence had been possible, was reinstated as prior; only, however, to be deposed again four years later. This agreement was ratified by the king at Hereford on 15 November 1283. Peckham, who had not been consulted in framing it, wrote angrily to Giffard on the subject, but without result. Some renewed attempts to assert jurisdiction over the Priory were made by bishops of Worcester in the fourteenth century, but in no instance with success.

Of Malvern's history in the fourteenth century there is little record. The whole of the documents belonging to the convent

[1] "Nos pro nobis et successoribus nostris predictam exemptionem in ipso prioratu Majoris Malvernie veraciter agnoscentes, predictum Prioratum et monachos loci ejusdem ab omni jurisdictione episcopali ac ordinaria exemptos et liberos profitemur, necnon solis Abbati et conventui Westmonasterii subesse debere."—f. 193, d.

[2] f. 194, d.

seem to have been destroyed at the time of the Dissolution. It is therefore only in other chronicles, chiefly the bishops' registers, that we can find any mention of its affairs. And at this period they supply us with no more than the casual mention of some occasional sale or exchange of land, or of bargains in regard to advowsons in which Malvern was implicated. It is, however, of interest to note that, strained as the relations might remain between bishop and prior, the monks of Worcester and those of Great Malvern were on amicable terms. Arrangements concerning property were frequent between them, and appear to have been conducted without friction. In the Worcester accounts of 1376 there is mentioned an annual payment to the Malvern choir-master:[1] presumably a fee for musical instruction. The sum was the not exorbitant one of twelve pence a year.

The fifteenth century witnessed the reconstruction of the Priory church. We may be sure, indeed, that not many years passed at any period since its first erection in 1085 without some alteration of or addition to the original structure. A corbel and vaulting-rib still *in situ* show the crypt to have been transitional-Norman. Capitals and broken shafts[2] recently disinterred belong to the first type of Early English. Many fragments of masonry bearing the ball-flower ornament have been found in the soil at the eastern end of the church, seeming to indicate that the Lady Chapel, taken down after the convent was dissolved, was built in the Decorated period. Within the body of the church doubtless some additions were made during these centuries. But the building carried out between 1400 and 1460 was of so extensive a kind as to sweep away all these lesser changes. With its completion, the main portions of the church had the character which they retain to-day. Some of the Norman work is of later date than the rest. Between two stages of the Perpendicular reconstruction a clear difference is to be seen. But the church as the Perpendicular builders left it, and as we see it now, is in design the work of two centuries alone, the eleventh and the fifteenth. Of the intervening Early

[1] The payment is "magistro capelle beate Marie Malvernie."—*Compotus Rolls of Priory of Worcester* (Worc. Hist. Soc.), ii, 16.

[2] The capitals, as well as the shafts, are of marble. Their size and character, as well as the site where they were found, suggest that they may have belonged to the chapter-house or cloister arcade.

English and Decorated periods there is nothing *in situ*.[1] All that is not Perpendicular is Norman. The contrast between the massive pier-arcade and the graceful lightness of choir and presbytery recalls the similar effect to be seen in Gloucester Cathedral. Indeed, the architectural influence of Gloucester can be marked throughout the Malvern church.

This influence must be borne in mind when assigning dates to the reconstruction, for Gloucester was virtually the birth-place of the Perpendicular style. To a year little if any later than 1400 must be attributed the arches of Malvern choir aisles, the simple yet effective aisle-vaults, and perhaps the tracery of the west window. Elsewhere the fifteenth century work is of a later character, though the whole building was complete by 1460. As Aldwin built it, the church had followed the Romanesque type common to the west of England, of which the circular capitals and abaci crowning the cylindrical piers are characteristic. It was a cruciform building with a central tower; the nave, of six bays, had narrow aisles; the transepts were probably small.[2] To determine the original form of the presbytery is difficult, owing to the fifteenth-century removal of all Norman work eastward of the tower. The apse of these later builders is thought to have followed the line of the interior Norman apse; a concentric semicircular and exterior wall[3] was separated from the other by an ambulatory, corresponding to that which now divides the apse from the rectangular eastern wall of the church. It seems safe to assume that the Norman termination of the eastern limb was ter-apsidal.[4] More detailed

[1] Unless an image-bracket now attached to the east wall of the north choir aisle be in its original position. It terminates in a roughly-modelled ball-flower.

[2] The south transept remained small after the fifteenth-century reconstruction; its size was probably that of the north transept also in Norman days.

[3] During Sir G. Scott's restoration some traces of this outer wall seem to have been found: "The arrangement of the eastern end of the Norman fabric had, as he had been informed by the clerk of the works, been ascertained; a portion of semicircular walling had been revealed a little to the north-east of the east door—doubtless the remains of the walls of an aisle which, as pointed out by Prof. Willis, ran round the apse." Mr. Freeman at Brit. Arch. Assoc. (*Proceedings*, vol. xxx, 1862).

[4] As at Gloucester, Worcester, and Pershore (all Benedictine churches) on the peri-apsidal plan, with the three apses radiating east, north-east, and south-east.

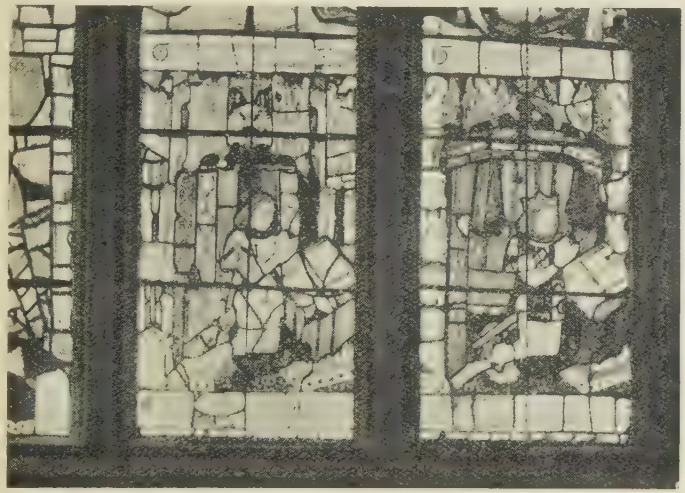
conjectures in regard to the form given to this part of the church in its earliest days are easy to make but difficult to substantiate by evidence.

It is less difficult to discern the work of the fifteenth century builders. They rebuilt entirely the presbytery, choir, and choir aisles. They raised a new tower, manifestly copied from that of Gloucester, upon the Norman tower-piers, having necessarily strengthened the older masonry. They opened up the choir and transepts by lofty arches at the crossing. They doubled the width of the north aisle of the nave. No corresponding extension was feasible in the case of the south aisle, as the cloister-garth and conventual buildings immediately adjoined it. For the same reason they left on this side the high Norman windows (placed above the roof of the cloister-walk), the Norman door giving access to the church from the cloisters at the north-east angle, and the Norman arch leading into the south transept. Though the pier-arcade was allowed to remain as Aldwin had fashioned it, they took down the nave walls to within a few feet of the arcade, and upon the Norman rubble remaining they laid new courses of masonry. In all probability they heightened the roof of the church throughout. Other details of their work will be noticed more conveniently in the two following chapters. But the scope of their changes may be summarized by saying that, except where structural necessities compelled them to leave the Norman work, they re-made the church from floor to pinnacle and from one end to the other. A clue to the progress of their labour is supplied by the tiles, used extensively for floor and mural decoration. As has been mentioned, some of them bear the dates 1453 and 1456. By 1460 the rebuilding seems to have been complete. On 30 July of that year John Carpenter, Bishop of Worcester, arrived at the convent, and was received "with the ringing of bells." On the following day he consecrated the seven altars within the church.[1]

Five years earlier the Wars of the Roses had been begun. In 1471 the battle of Tewkesbury was fought within eighteen miles of Malvern. But the quiet life of the monastery seems to have been little affected by outside events. Between 1460 and 1485 the forty windows of the church, with one exception, were filled

[1] *Epis. Reg. Carpenter*, i, f. 165.

with stained glass, of which so large a proportion fortunately survives.[1] Its exquisite beauty can scarcely be overpraised. The west window contained a representation of the Doom, said to have been given by Richard III.[2] This scene unfortunately has been lost, and the glass, of the same period, now occupying



SIR REGINALD BRAY AND PRINCE ARTHUR, FROM NORTH WINDOW OF JESUS CHAPEL

the window was transferred to it about 1820 from other parts of the church. But the arms of Richard III and also of the ill-fated Edward V survive, and are now in the south-west window

[1] The Malvern glass seems to have escaped injury from the Puritans; it suffered lamentably from eighteenth-century ignorance and neglect. In the reign of Charles I a full inventory of it was drawn up by Habington, and we have others in Thomas's book of 1725 and the *Antiquarian Repertory* of 1780. Thomas mentions that, a few years before he wrote, the lower lights of the transept north window had been blown in by a gale; and "neglecto pristino ordine reponebantur."

[2] Habington's comment is "Richard 3rd, had'st thou deeply considered of the Judgement Seate (the veresemblance whereof by all likelyhood thy bounty here erected) thou would'st never soe high have prized a puffe of ambition!" (Hab., ii, 189; Worcs. Hist. Soc.)

of the choir clerestory. A special historical interest is attached to the north window of the north transept, or Jesus chapel, which was glazed a quarter of a century after the rest. In its lowest lights were portraits of Henry VII, his wife Elizabeth, Prince Arthur, Sir Reginald Bray, Sir John Savage, and Sir Thomas Lovell, with the inscription: "Orate pro bono statu nobilissimi et excellentissimi regis Henrici septimi et Elizabethe regine ac domini Arthuri principis filii eorundem necnon predilectissime consortis sue et trium militum." Prince Arthur married Katharine of Aragon on 14 November 1501. He died on 2 April 1502. Thus the date of this window can be fixed with much precision. The remarkable portraits of Prince Arthur[1] and Sir Reginald Bray still occupy their original positions. Portions of the inscription and of the other figures may also be discerned among the fragments with which the window is now glazed. The crowned head of King Henry is in the cusping of the second light (counting from the left), immediately below the transom.

Reginald Bray is known to history not merely as a king's favourite but as an architectural enthusiast. He superintended the building of St. George's Chapel at Windsor: he is said to have designed Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster. He was present at the laying of its foundation-stone in January 1502-3, but died in the following August. Yet Chambers' *History of Malvern* (1823) asserts that Bray "after showing his skill in the superintendence of his master's chapel, at Westminster Abbey, and at St. George's, Windsor, built also this church—or rather he re-edified it!" And this statement, with its wild chronology, has reappeared in almost every subsequent account of Great Malvern Priory. That Bray superintended any building in Malvern after the completion of the Westminster chapel is impossible, for the sufficient reason that he was dead. When the Perpendicular reconstruction of Malvern Priory Church was in progress, Bray was fully engaged in warfare and political intrigue. That he was, in Habington's phrase, "a great bene-

[1] A much later, and crudely-coloured replica of this panel is in Worcester cathedral, where Arthur was buried. Another copy, said to be contemporary with that at Malvern but repaired in the eighteenth century, is in a window of West Pennard Church, Somerset. Nothing is known of its history. In the Flemish east window of St. Margaret's, Westminster, is a figure which the guide-book, on the authority of Dean Farrar, identifies as Prince Arthur. It is now held to be a likeness of Henry VII.

factor" to this church need not be doubted. But his benefactions probably took the form of assisting to pay for the glazing of the new windows. We may well suppose this window in the north transept to have been a royal gift obtained through his influence. There is an old tradition that Henry VII stayed in the Malvern monastery. This is not unlikely, as he is known to have visited the monks of Worcester. And in this case the window in question may have been designed to commemorate the royal visit.

We approach the time when the Priory of Great Malvern was dissolved. Its cell of Alvecote, in Warwickshire, fell with the rest of the smaller houses in 1536. It sought exemption as a dependency of Malvern, but without success. On 8 February 1538, when the visitation and forced surrender of the larger houses had already been begun, an indenture[1] was made between "Thomas (Dyrham) by the sufferance of God prior of the monasterie of our Blessed Lady and Saynt Michael the archaungell of Moche Malverne in the Countie of Worcester and the Convent of the same place, and John ap Rice of London, gentilman," by which Ap Rice leased from the Convent, for ninety-nine years, property belonging to it in Breconshire. John ap Rice was one of the four principal "visitors" employed by Thomas Cromwell, and the granting of the lease at this period looks like a vain attempt to gain his favour. Not for ninety-nine years, and barely for one year, did he hold this land from the Malvern monks. Like many another tenant, he had reason to regret the change when a secular landlord replaced the religious houses, with their less rigorous methods. Some two years later we find him writing to the king's receivers, acknowledging a precept to appear at Worcester for "the payment of the rent of Malvern that I have in lease at Brecknoke," and begging to be excused on the ground that he is at Hereford, "weary and letted with business."

As the attempt to propitiate Ap Rice by granting him this lease seemed unlikely to achieve its purpose, on 8 November 1538 the prior wrote to Cromwell, saying that the monks think it "expedient to ask the King's pleasure how they shall order themselves"[2]—probably in the hope he would name a sum by

[1] Quoted in Lloyd's *Historical Memoranda of Breconshire* (London, 1904), vol. ii, p. 41.

[2] L. v. P., Henry VIII, xiii, pt. 2, 905.

the payment of which the continuance of their house might be secured. On 13 December a final effort was made to continue "the upstanding" of Great Malvern Priory in a modified form. It is a remarkable fact that this effort was made, at the prior's[1] request, by Bishop Latimer. Considering his views, the tribute paid by him to the prior is very notable, as is his wish that at least a few monasteries in every county should be spared. It would indeed have been well, as subsequent events proved, for the cause of learning and the social welfare of the people had his wise counsel been accepted. After paying some rather odd compliments, in mingled English and Latin, to Cromwell, Latimer's letter to him proceeds:[2]

But now, sir, another thing, that by your favour I might be a motionaire unto you, at the request of an honest man, the Prior of Great Malvern in my diocese, referring the success of the whole matter to your only approved wisdom and benign goodness in every case – for I know that I do play the fool, but yet with my foolishness I somewhat quiet an unquiet man, and mitigate his heaviness. . . . This man both heareth and feareth, as he saith, the suppression of his House, which, though he will be conformable to the king's highness pleasure and your own, as both I advertised him and also his bounden duty is to be, yet nevertheless, if he thought his enterprise would not be mistaken nor turn to any displeasure, he would be an humble suitor to your lordship, and by the same to the king's good grace, for the upstanding of his aforesaid House and continuance of the same to many good purposes– not in Monkery, he meaneth not so, God forbid!—but any other ways, as should be thought and seem good to the king's majesty, as to maintain teaching, preaching, study, with praying, and (to which he is much given) good housekeeping: for to the virtue of hospitality he hath been greatly inclined from the beginning, and is very much commended in these parts for the same. So that if 500 marks to the king's highness, with 200 marks to yourself for your good will, might occasion the promotion of his intent, at least for the time of his life, he doubteth not to make his friends for the same, if so little could bring so much to pass. The man is old, a good housekeeper, feedeth many, and that daily, for the country is poor and full of penury. And alas, my good lord, shall we not see two or three (*sc.* monasteries) in every shire changed to such remedy? Thus too this honest man's importunity hath

[1] Richard Whitborn, *alias* Bedyll, seems to have succeeded Thomas Dyrham as prior between 8 November and 13 December.

[2] The whole letter is given by Dugdale (Monast. *sub* Great Malvern). In the following extract the spelling and punctuation have been modernized.

brought me beyond my duty, saving for the confidence and trust I have always in your benignity. As he hath knowledge from you, so will he prepare for you, ever obedient to your advertisement. . . . Blessed be the God of England that worketh all, Whose instrument you be.

Cromwell may well have smiled as he read this letter. Constantly he received offers of money, on a much more liberal scale, if he would spare this or the other religious house;[1] in no case was the bribe sufficient to divert him from his rapacious policy of destruction. Great Malvern went the way of the rest, and before the close of the year 1539 had been "surrendered and dissolved." The deed of surrender has not been preserved, and, rather curiously, no entry concerning it is to be found in the Close Roll. Probably this convent was among the last survivors. The pension-list was dated 12 January 1539-40.[2] An annuity of £66 13*s.* 4*d.* was granted to the prior; one of £13 6*s.* 8*d.* to the sub-prior; eight other monks received allowances averaging £6 a year.

At once the usual work of destruction was begun. Some of the "superfluous buildings"—the term regularly included the church, chapter-house, dormitory, and refectory of a monastic house; the superior's dwelling and farm-buildings being excluded from it—were sold for £9 8*s.* 4*d.*[3] This payment seems to have purchased the buildings enumerated above with the exception of the church; of this only the Lady Chapel and the small south transept were destroyed. Of the rest, the prior's house,[4] the roomed gateway[5] of the monastery, and the guesten-hall, a timber building exterior from, but near to, the south-west angle of the cloisters, were allowed to survive. Eight bells from the tower were acquired by the parishioners of Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire.[6] The lead was stripped from the church roof and sold.[7]

[1] *E.g.*, £2,000 from Colchester.

[2] L. v. P., Hen. VIII, xv, 51.

[3] Mins. Accounts, 31-2 Henry VIII (7431 *m.* 6).

[4] Replaced, apparently (as panelling from it still in existence shows), by a dwelling-house erected in late Elizabethan or early Jacobean times. In the early part of the nineteenth century this was used as a hotel. Midway through this century it was destroyed, and the present "Abbey Hotel" built on the site.

[5] Still standing, though greatly injured by Victorian "restoration."

[6] Mins. Accounts, *ut supra*, *m.* 6, d. These bells are no longer in the tower of Watton.

[7] *Ib.*, *m.* 7.

There can be no doubt that the rest of the church was only to stand until the Crown found a purchaser anxious for a cheap supply of building-material. But at this juncture the inhabitants of Malvern took a step for which we cannot be too thankful. Headed by one John Pope, they purchased the Priory church from the Crown, in order that it should replace the church of St. Thomas as their parish church. The price was £20, and this was paid in two instalments. The actual wording of the receipt runs, in English, as follows:

(We discharge) John Pope and the other parishioners and inhabitants within the parish of Great Malvern in the County of Worcester as of part of £20 of the price of the church and tower, the chancel, together with the aisles and chapels within the same church, sold to the aforesaid John and the parishioners there and their successors, by consent of the Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, namely, of the part of the said sum being in arrear this year over and above the £10 thereof paid this year.[1]

Thus, in 1541, did the Priory church of St. Mary and St. Michael become the parish church of Great Malvern; thus, like the people of Tewkesbury and Romsey, did the parishioners save a glorious building from destruction.

While, however, the church of the monastery was saved, all the documents and books belonging to the convent were thrown away or destroyed. There exists, so far as is known, neither chartulary nor customary, and not so much as one service-book,

[1] Exch. Aug. Off. Mins. Accounts, 32-33 Hen. VIII (co. Worcester), 7432. The original (with the contracted words written at length) is as follows:

"Johannem Pope et alios parochianos et inhabitantes infra parochiam Maioris Malverne in comitatu Wigorniae ut de parte 20 librarum de precio ecclesie et campanilis cancelli cum insulis et capellis infra eandem ecclesiam, venditorum praefato Johanni et parochianis ibidem ac successoribus suis per assensum cancellarii Curie Augmentationum, videlicet de parte dicte summe a retro existenti hoc anno ultra 10 libras inde solutas hoc anno."

Authentic information concerning this purchase is here printed for the first time. Various writers on Malvern, following Dugdale, assert that the parishioners bought the church from John Knotsford for £200, but give no authority for their statement. Knotsford, in point of fact, never owned the church, which was acquired direct from the Crown. He appears on the scene four years later, in a different connection. In 1544 William Pynnocke bought the prior's house, with the garden, mills, etc., of the dissolved monastery. In 1545 John Knotsford purchased these from Pynnocke.—L. v. P., Hen. VIII, xix, pt. 2, 166 (66) and xx, pt. i, 846 (93, p. 428).

The version of the church's purchase gives in Gasquet's *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* (1910 edition, p. 425) is very inaccurate, and the reference to the Mins. Accounts is wrong.

which was the property of this house. Richard Gylham, who had been vicar of the parish church of St. Thomas at least as early as 1535,[1] transferred his services to the church of St. Mary and St. Michael when this became the parish church in 1541, bringing with him the church plate, vestments, etc. He was still vicar in 1552, when he signed the inventory of goods for Edward VI's commissioners, mentioning that a silver chalice had been sold two years earlier "to pay the church debts and to repair the church." The stripping of lead and the pulling down of the south transept and Lady Chapel obviously must have entailed a considerable amount of repairs to the damaged building. It is to be noticed that four bells "in the steeple," besides three smaller ones, are mentioned in the inventory. Either these must have been acquired since 1540, or they too may have been brought across from the church of St. Thomas.

From the time of the Dissolution of the convent to the close of the eighteenth century the materials for a history of this church are exceedingly scanty. With the disappearance of the monastery and of the employment it provided, Malvern became merely an inconspicuous village. Its inhabitants can have filled but a minute portion of the great church,[2] and the burden of keeping it in repair was quite beyond their means. The churchwardens' accounts for the year 1665 have chanced to survive; the total expenditure they show for the twelve months is less than £12. Yet before this date the virtues of the Malvern waters, which afterwards were to transform the village into a fashionable town, had begun to be recognized. Their merits, and the striking features of the parish church, are both commemorated in a song belonging to the first part of the seventeenth century.[3]

Thou hast a famous church,
And rarely builded;
No country town hath such,
Most men have yielded.

[1] He is named as vicar in a will of this date.

[2] How very small the population was is shown by the Parish Registers.

[3] The authorship is attributed, though on not very convincing authority, to Edmund Rea (Vicar, 1612-1640). One of the stanzas, however, begins: "A chase for royal deer Round doth beset thee." This fixes the date of the song as prior to 1632, in which year, by an Order in Council, Malvern Chase was formally disafforested, and the lands "freed from his Majesty's game of deer there."

For pillars stout and strong,
And windows large and long,
Remember in thy song
To praise the Lord.

While the last of the sixteen stanzas, with a touch of quaint inconsequence, records how at the Malvern springs:

A thousand bottles there
Were filled weekly,
And many costrils rare
For stomachs sickly;
Some of them into Kent,
Some were to London sent,
Others to Brunswick[1] went—
O, praise the Lord!

Considering the nearness of Malvern to the scene of the battle of Worcester, the fact that the Priory church was undamaged by the Puritan army is fortunate indeed. Between the time of Habington's inventory (*temp.* Charles I) and the year 1725, when Dr. Thomas's account of the church was published, a certain amount of damage seems to have been done to the windows, but this was caused by the gradual decay and weakening of the ancient leading, which made the glass unable to resist the pressure of high winds. In June 1746 the church was visited by the antiquary, W. Cole;[2] "The Priory Church is complete," he writes, "and a noble Structure it is." He had intended to include an inventory of the windows in his notes, but explains that Thomas's book makes this unnecessary. He mentions that there are remaining six bells in the tower, that "the Altar is upon an eminence of a great many steps," and that "the stalls which formerly surrounded the Choir are now removed into the North Aisle."

In the latter half of the eighteenth century the whole building gradually fell into a very bad state of repair.[3] A visitor in

[1] Thus in *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1780. Nash (1782), whom Card and all subsequent transcribers follow, reads "Berwick."

[2] B.M. Add. MSS., 5811, f. 119.

[3] The churchwardens' books from 1762 to 1783 contain, beyond glaziers' bills, only one item of work done to the fabric: in 1769 we have "paid to the blacksmith for work done to the tower, £1 17*s.* 9*d.*," and probably this merely represents repairs of the bells or bell-wheels. Yet in 1762 £3 5*s.* was paid for "a new surplis," and the rather odd amount of £3 2*s.* 10½*d.* in 1783 for "the pulpit-cloth."

the year 1798 found that the churchyard was used as a playground "by unrestrained youth, whose recreation consisted in throwing stones at the numerous windows."[1] Within the Jesus Chapel was a pigeon-loft, said to be the property of the vicar. The roof was in such a state that, to quote the vivid phrase of another contemporary writer, "the crumbling plaster fell upon the uplifted eye of devotion." In 1805 a correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* said:[2] "The walls and floors are dreadfully damp, and parts of the church sometimes flooded; the ivy is suffered to grow within the building; at least, it has pierced through the interstices formed by the tracery of the eastern window, and covers a large portion of the eastern end of the fabric. It is, in short, in a state unfit for the parishioners, disgraceful to the parish, and will soon be beyond the power of repair."

Possibly as the result of these reproaches, some attempt at improving the fabric was made in the year 1809,[3] when the vestry adopted a resolution that "the repair of the ceiling in the church and the cleansing and colouring of the walls be immediately proceeded on." Again, in 1812, it was decided[4] that "the windows of the church be repaired by proper persons, and that the glass for that purpose be purchased by the parish." Later in the same year a Mr. Hartley was allowed to erect an iron rail round a family vault in the Jesus Chapel "in consideration of the same W. H. Hartley putting the north window over the same in good and substantial repair." Unfortunately, the "proper persons" to whom the work was entrusted seem to have been local glaziers. They pieced together fragments from various windows in wild confusion, inserted the Latin inscriptions upside down and without the least reference to the subjects above them, and mingled hideous coloured glass of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the superb glass of the fifteenth century.

In 1815 the Rev. Henry Card became vicar. He devoted himself, with admirable energy, to raising money for improving

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, Oct. 1802; account written four years after the visit.

[2] Oct. 1805.

[3] In this year a "brief," authorizing collections for the restoration fund, was granted by George III. It seems to have brought in less than £10.

[4] Vestry Minute-Book.

the condition of the church, and collected £1,700 within the first three years of his incumbency. It can scarcely be said, however, that this sum was used to the best advantage. The paving of the floor and the provision of additional pews were clearly desirable, and to the filling of the west window with ancient glass from less conspicuous windows no serious objection can be taken. With the balance of the fund he erected a new organ gallery at the west end,[1] placed a "classical" altar-piece, with "an Ionic entablature" in the sanctuary, built two gallery pews, one above the other on each side (*i.e.*, north and south) of the crossing, furnished these with "rich crimson cloth," painted the oak of the ancient stalls, picking out the misericords in "a clay-coloured tint," and finally spent a considerable proportion of the restoration-fund upon the window at the east end of the north choir-aisle, "which in the year 1820 was newly filled, in a very superb manner, with stained glass upon which is emblazoned the arms of the different benefactors to the repairs of this church."[2] Forty-six subscribers, in fact, were rewarded for their gifts by seeing their coats of arms included in this window. While money was spent in this fashion, no attempt was made to repair the roof, which was far from water-tight, or the exterior masonry of the building. In 1831 the vestry reported that the roof "is so dilapidated, that unless it is soon repaired in a substantial manner, it will threaten ruin to the whole of that venerable structure, which has so long attracted the admiration of the antiquary and of every man of taste and science." Accordingly, a fresh subscription-list was opened and at intervals between 1831 and 1844 a great improvement was made in the condition of the church's exterior fabric. Within the building the most noticeable change was the lighting of the south aisle of the nave by three new windows in the Perpendicular style, replacing a series of small Norman windows—of which one, though blocked, still survives above the Norman doorway to the cloisters. In 1840 the vestry resolved that "for the further embellishment of the church, the area of the North Transcript [*sic*] be cleared . . . inasmuch as

[1] An earlier gallery, paid for by the "psalm-singers themselves," had been placed here in 1725.—*Contemporary record in Porch Room.*

[2] The authorities for this period are Southall's *Description of Malvern* (1822), Chambers' *History of Malvern* (1823), Card's *Antiquities of Malvern Priory* (1834), and the Vestry Minute-Book.

THE CHOIR IN 1824]

the ancient font which has been replaced at the western end of the nave is now used for Baptisms, the marble Font in the said chapel be forthwith taken down and removed with the wooden railings round the same: that the iron railings," *i.e.*, those round the Hartley tomb—" be also taken down."

In 1860-1, during the incumbency of the Rev. S. Fisk, the whole church was extensively "restored" under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott, at a cost of over £11,000. But the work was carried out on far more conservative lines than many so-called "restorations" of this period. We may regret, however, the vigour with which the ancient masonry was scraped and cleaned, and the lack of intelligence with which much of the ancient glass was taken from the windows it originally occupied and placed almost at haphazard in others, without regard to sequence of subject or to the inscriptions, a large proportion of which were now inserted upside down, or beneath pictures to which they did not belong. On the other hand, many undoubted improvements were made, including the removal of the gallery-pews, the "classical altar-piece," and other disfiguring work of the early nineteenth century. The ceiling of the nave was repaired and repainted; new ceilings were provided for the nave aisles and the north transept. Most of the floors were lowered to their original level, but it is to be regretted that the north transept (Jesus Chapel) was not allowed to remain at its ancient level, which was higher than that of the adjoining aisle.[1] Taken as a whole, however, the restoration of this church was far less "thorough," and proportionately better, than most which belong to this period. In various respects, indeed, the church of Great Malvern Priory has been singularly fortunate—that it was saved by the parishioners in 1541, that so large a proportion of its superb glass survived the ages both of violence and neglect, that the decay which would soon have made the building a ruin was checked in the first half of the nineteenth century, and that the 1861-2 "restoration" was, comparatively speaking, conservative in its character.

In 1894 the north-west porch, with the room above it, was rebuilt at a cost of £1,000; it must be confessed that the new work was but a poor and unfaithful copy of the old. On 24 March 1895 a gale caused the south-east pinnacle of the

[1] As mentioned by Habington, and shown also by the level of the blocked doorway in the west wall of the chapel.

tower to fall; it crashed through the choir-roof into the church, causing considerable damage. This happened on a Sunday morning, but most fortunately the service was over and the congregation had left a short time before the accident occurred. In consequence of it, a thorough examination of the tower was made by Sir T. G. Jackson, and serious structural weakness was discovered. This was made good at a cost of over £2,000.

During the incumbency of the late Canon R. P. Pelly St. Anne's Chapel was admirably restored, and used again for weekday services. This work was done under the superintendence of Mr. J. N. Comper. Within the last few years (1909-1913) a good deal of work has been carried out, of which it is unnecessary to speak in detail. In 1910 the clerestory windows on the south side of the choir and the windows in St. Anne's Chapel were re-leaded, and the opportunity was taken of rearranging the subjects in their proper order, of reinserting the surviving inscriptions under the subjects to which they belong, and of banishing pieces of stained glass which had been inserted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The work was executed by Messrs. Kempe and Co.: in the task of rearranging the subjects the present writer had the invaluable advice of Dr. M. R. James. The tower also has been strengthened, and a dry area made round the church. A consulting architect has been appointed, who makes at least an annual survey of the building. By such means any points of structural weakness are likely to be detected and dealt with promptly, which, indeed, seems a necessary precaution in the case of any large church many centuries old. The alternative method, of waiting till a settlement or actual fall indicates that decay has been suffered to go on unchecked for years, is common enough, but neither (to take the lowest view) economical in the long run nor consistent with that loving care which our ancient parish churches, that superb heritage from the past, are entitled to receive at our hands.

EXTERIOR, FROM NORTH-WEST

CHAPTER II

THE EXTERIOR

Grateful as we must feel to the people of Malvern who, in 1541, saved the Priory church from destruction, we may regret their inability to purchase with the church the whole of the land immediately around it. That on the south side, formerly the site of the convent buildings and cloister garth, is now the garden of a hotel. At the west end, where the ground rises sharply, buildings belonging to this hotel stand within a few feet of the church wall, and the intervening passage, like the land on the south side, is private property. Thus a visitor finds himself unable to study at short range the exterior of the church except from the north and east. Happily the churchyard (long since disused as a burial-ground) on the north side of the church is both spacious and picturesque. From a spot near its north-western angle, close to the wall of the post office, the best general view of the church is to be obtained. The impression it gives, however, is, in some degree, misleading, since it would cause a stranger to suppose the building to date wholly from the Perpendicular period. The nave clerestory windows are seen at once to be later in character than the corresponding windows of the choir, yet all come within the limits of the fifteenth century. Another, and a more accurate "first impression" derived from this point of view, is the close architectural kinship between the tower of Great Malvern Priory and that of Gloucester Cathedral. The latter has three stages instead of two, and there are some variations of detail, but the general resemblance is so marked as to make it clear that the Malvern tower was a modified copy of that at Gloucester.

Near the steps leading from higher ground to the drive in front of the north porch stands a churchyard cross. Its well-proportioned shaft, with a trefoiled niche on its west face, is of the fifteenth century. The original cross-head has been destroyed. In the eighteenth century a top-heavy sundial was

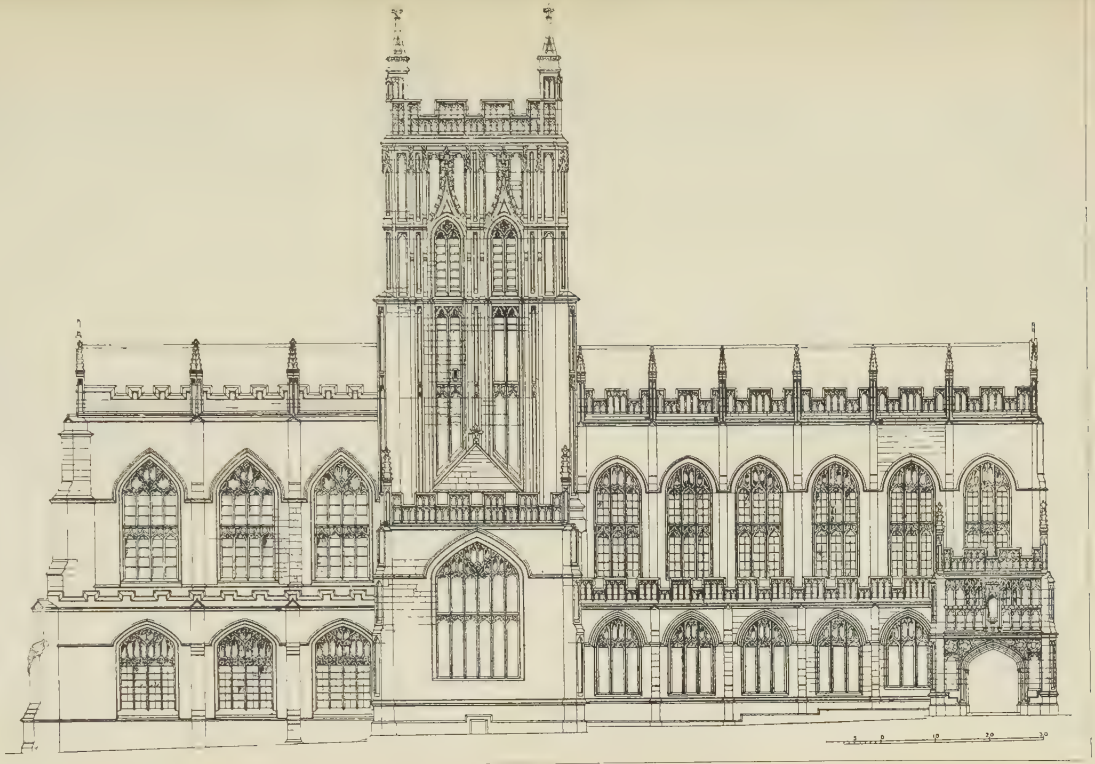
made to replace it. In 1896 this was removed, and is now to be seen on the ground, a few yards nearer the centre of the churchyard. A new cross replaced it as the termination of the shaft, but, with curious incongruity, this was copied from a design of the early thirteenth century, with the result that we have apparently an Early English head surmounting a Perpendicular shaft.

The **North Porch.** This was rebuilt in 1894, and but little of the ancient masonry survives. In the centre, however, between the square-headed traceried windows lighting the porch-room, is a fifteenth-century niche crowned with tabernacle work, in which modern figures of the Virgin and Child have been placed. All the panelling and most of the vaulting of the porch are modern, but some of the ancient vault bosses have been restored to their original position.

The **North Side.** An examination of the fabric shows that three varieties of local stone were used by the fifteenth-century builders: (1) a coarse oolitic stone (probably from Bredon) employed for the crocketed hood-moulds and finials above the belfry windows; (2) a red sandstone, probably from Ombersley; (3) Highley, a greenish sandstone, of which by far the greater part of the ancient masonry consists. In the walls it has weathered well when bedded rightly. But a large proportion of the blocks were not set on their quarry bed, and these have "scaled" badly. In fact, much of this stone, owing to its decay, has been replaced in the various "restorations" which the building has undergone.

The difference in date between the nave, on the one hand, and the transept and eastern limb of the church on the other, may readily be discerned on this north side. Apart from the evidence of the windows, attention should be paid to the string running round the face of the walls immediately below the cills. From (and including) the transept westward, this string is unmistakably Perpendicular. Eastward of the transept, and on the face of the east wall, its form is almost Decorated. The buttress at the north-east angle has also some suggestions of an early date. The pierced embattled parapet of the nave is admirably light and graceful, contrasting effectively with the panelled merlons of the aisle parapet below.

The blocked door in the west wall of the north transept shows the higher level of the ancient floor in this chapel. At



THE NORTH ELEVATION

this door, traditionally, the almoner of the convent administered relief to the poor of the neighbourhood. Its four centred form, however, is indicative of a late date. Above it is a stone shield, not in its original position,[1] bearing the arms of Beauchamp of Warwick. It will be noticed that on the north wall of the transept the plinth rises to form a square head, belonging probably to a door which led to a crypt beneath the transept. A close examination of the masonry, both in this transept wall and in the eastern limb of the church, will show that a good deal of Norman stone was utilized afresh by the fifteenth-century builders.

The **East End.** With the destruction in 1541 of the Lady Chapel, and of the passage connecting it with the ambulatory, the appearance of the eastern end of the church was greatly changed. The length of the Lady Chapel is said to have been fifty feet. Detached bosses, fragments of mouldings with ball flower ornament, and other pieces of worked stone which have been excavated from the site seem to show that the Lady Chapel was of the Decorated period, and was not refashioned in the fifteenth-century rebuilding of the church. Of the passage which gave entrance to it a small portion of the tiled floor and a fragment of the panelling on the north wall (with fifteenth-century feathered cusping) are still to be seen outside the present east door. The mullions of the great east window are carried down to form a stone screen separating this passage from the ambulatory; this screen is now glazed, and in the centre a doorway and flight of steps were inserted in 1861, to form an eastern entrance to the church. Of the arch above it, the inner member —inserted as a relieving arch—is modern. The removal of the passage and Lady Chapel left the church with a torn and gaping east end; much of the present exterior masonry, therefore, is merely rough filling, put in after 1541, and strengthened into buttresses where the stresses seemed to require them without any regular design.

Beneath the Lady Chapel was a Transitional crypt of the twelfth century. Foundations still exist, in a tolerably complete state, beneath the ground, and measurements of them which have been taken show that the dimensions of the crypt were 39 ft. by 21 ft. It was impossible, unfortunately, to leave this

[1] Formerly it was within the church, above the east window.

ground open, but a portion of the soil adjoining the east wall of the church has been removed in order to show a moulded corbel and rib of the vault belonging to the crypt. These will be seen on the north side of the central steps. On the south side is the blocked stairway which gave access to the crypt from St. Anne's chapel; within this chapel the head of the stairway is to be seen. A second moulded corbel, probably not *in situ*, will be noticed on the south side of the steps. The actual floor-level of the crypt is about three feet deeper than the level of the excavation on the north side of the steps. The fine buttress at the south-east angle of the church deserves attention. The arrangement of the subsidiary buttresses on the east face is somewhat perplexing, but it is unsafe to draw any definite data from their positions. As suggested above, they were probably mere builders' work, hastily erected to safeguard weak points.

The **South Side** of the church, as already mentioned, abuts on to the garden of a hotel. This has been raised artificially to its present level, and the plinth-course of the church was found a few years ago to be in places five feet below the ground-level. Fortunately a dry area has been constructed to save the sand-stone courses from further damage by contact with wet soil. On this south side, just westward of St. Anne's Chapel, may be seen part of the jamb of a fifteenth-century window—the return (east) window of the destroyed south transeptal chapel.[1] As in the case of the Lady Chapel at the east end, the destruction of this south chapel necessitated much filling to close the gap and to strengthen the tower; this was very roughly done with a mixture of brick and stone.

Moving westward, we come to the very picturesque Norman door, now blocked, which formed the entrance to the church from the north-east angle of the cloisters. Between this point and the Perpendicular door at the north-west angle of the cloisters the Norman wall of the aisle survives. The present windows in it were not inserted until the middle of the nineteenth century: prior to that a row of Norman windows, set high in the wall, had been allowed to remain by the fifteenth-century builders. One of them can still be seen over the Norman cloister door from within the church, but it is blocked and invisible from the outside. The Norman wall was considerably

[1] This chapel was dedicated to St. Ursula.

lower than the total height of the present aisle wall, and the start of the lean-to-roof which joined it to the nave is still visible. Within a few feet of the west cloister door, and still further westward, is another door, now blocked, in the same late Perpendicular style as its neighbour. Its use is uncertain, but the fact that it is above the floor-level of the church suggests that access through it was by a flight of stairs, and this may well have been the night-stair, communicating with the dorter. More commonly the dorter formed the upper storey on the east side of a cloister, yet examples of it on the western side are not very rare. And in this connection it must be remembered that the whole of this church was used only by the inmates of the monastery; the western portion was not parochial, as so commonly was the case elsewhere.

It should be added that the general view obtained from the south side is singularly beautiful. If ever this plot of ground, the site of the cloister-garth, could be restored to the church, the gain would be enormous. There is reason for supposing that excavations following the lines of the cloisters might result in some interesting discoveries. A few years ago a small portion of the ground immediately adjoining the church wall was opened up, and even these limited operations led to the finding of some large fifteenth-century tiles, differing from any within the church, some Early English shafts and capitals, and an inscribed fragment of a stone coffin-lid.

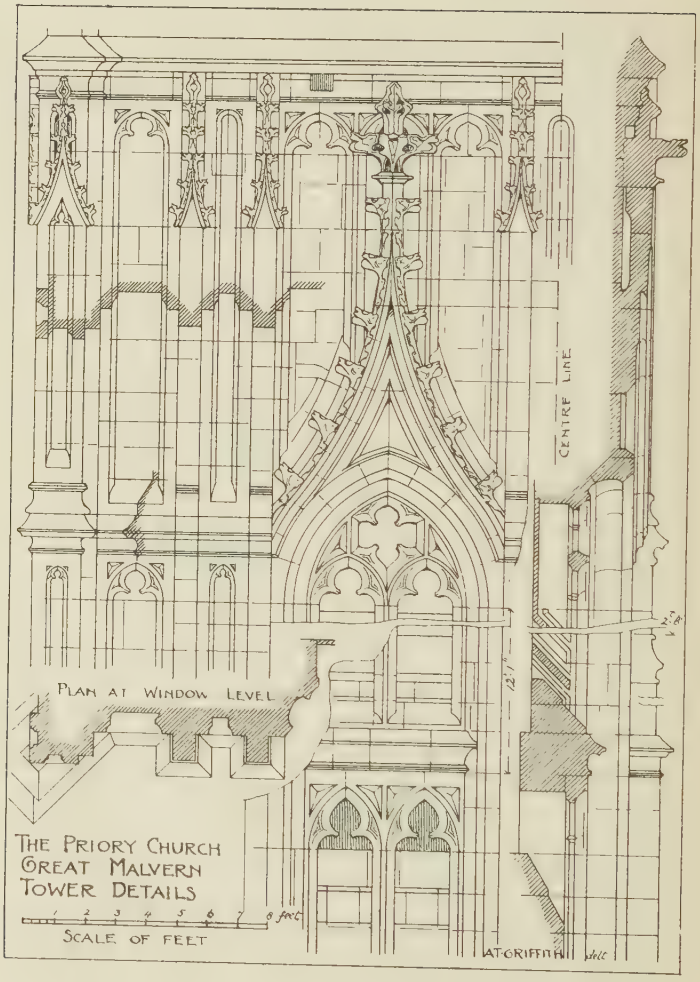
The **West End** also abuts on private ground, a narrow passage separating it from modern buildings. The design of the great west window is complete within the church only, where the side lights and those below the transom are panelled. Immediately above the cill of this window are three pairs of small trefoiled lights, formerly opening upon a passage running across the exterior face of the west wall from the porch room on the north to a small chamber, apparently corbelled out from the church wall, on the south.

Near the north west angle of the church there seem to be portions of an original Norman west front, with distinct traces of a pilaster strip. The Perpendicular wall was built, apparently, just within the Norman wall.

The **Roofs and Tower.** –Formerly the aisle roofs, and not only those of the nave, choir, and transept, were gabled. The parapets provide an effective diversity; the eye is pleased

EXTERIOR, SOUTH SIDE,[1] SHOWING BLOCKED NORMAN DOOR TO CLOISTERS

[1] Since this photograph was taken, the whole of the ivy, which was causing considerable damage to the masonry, has been removed.



DETAILS OF THE TOWER

by the contrast between the pierced embattled parapets of tower and nave, the panelled embattled parapets crossing the western gable and also found on the nave aisles and transept,[1] and the simpler and earlier parapets of the eastern limb. At intervals the line of the parapets is broken by the crocketed pinnacles capping the main buttresses. Altogether admirable also is the design of the central tower with its union of grace and strength. Its designer secured some charming shadow effects by the trefoiled openings to the ringing-chamber with steeply-splayed cills, and by the stone-louvred belfry windows, having ogee hood-moulds terminating in carved finials. It will be noticed that the fine panelling of the tower is carried down lower on the north and south exterior faces than on the east and west; on the former two sides it terminates in weatherings which represent the line of former high-pitched roofs to the transepts. On the summit of the tower the effect of the pierced embattled parapet with the square pinnacles and spirelets at the angles is most graceful. It should be noticed how exactly, though on a smaller scale, the ogee curve of the spirelets—a very unusual form—repeats the curve of the belfry windows below. The unity of composition in this tower is strongly emphasized by the manner in which the vertical lines are carried through from the roofs to the parapets.

[1] The embattled parapet of the north transept is plain on the east side, panelled on the north, and pierced on the west.

INTERIOR, EAST VIEW

CHAPTER III

THE INTERIOR

The visitor entering the church for the first time experiences a distinct surprise as he opens the north door. There is the strongest contrast between the exterior view he has gained from the churchyard—the view, as he might well suppose, of a purely fifteenth-century building—and the short, massive piers and rounded arches of the nave pier arcade which now confront him. Once more the affinity between Great Malvern Priory and Gloucester Cathedral will suggest itself. And, before examining any details, the visitor should take his stand at the west end of the nave, beside the font, whence an admirable general view of the interior can be obtained. He cannot fail to admire the strong effect of the massive Norman piers in the nave, the beautiful lines of the choir and presbytery, with their stone panelling and graceful Perpendicular shafts, the dark oak of the stalls, the altar raised to a commanding level by a flight of steps, the heads of the stone screen showing themselves beyond the apse, and, dominating the whole, the glorious east window, with its great central forked mullion, its intricate tracery, its wealth of ancient stained glass. Fragmentary as most of this is, it provides a colour effect so beautiful that the spectator wonders if in its complete condition this window could have charmed the eye more thoroughly than it does at present. And the whole lines and proportions of the interior give it an air of dignity and repose. There are ancient churches which strike one chiefly as being places of archaeological interest. There are others—and Great Malvern Priory church is of the number—which stir deeper feelings, and within them seems to brood the very Peace of God.

The **Nave** consists of six bays. The Norman piers, with circular bases, capitals, and abaci, are about 10 feet in height and 5 feet in diameter. The two eastern bays of the nave,

following a usual practice in monastic churches, were included in the ritual choir, and the screen crossed the nave at the second pier from the east. In confirmation of this we may note (*a*) two filled mortise-holes in the south wall, where the beams of the screen were set; (*b*) a trefoiled niche in the west face of the second pier (reckoning from the east), now filled with a modern brass—originally this would have stood immediately above an altar placed just outside the screen; (*c*) the three western piers on each side—*i.e.*, those outside the screen—have moulded bases and stand on large square plinths; the piers within the screen have no plinths, and their bases are plainly chamfered without mouldings.

The nave arcade consists of Norman semicircular arches, recessed in three orders. The western bay and respond on the south side should be noticed, since, by some accident, they escaped the severe "scraping" which the rest of the arcade received in the 1861 restoration. For some feet above the arcade the walls are composed of the Norman rubble; the line of junction with the Perpendicular masonry above possibly represents the base-line of a Norman triforium arcade.

The twelve clerestory windows of the nave, each of three lights and transomed, are, judging by the form of their tracery, of a later date than any other of the fifteenth-century windows in the church; they are very evidently later than the west window. The coats of arms in the glazing are mostly of the early nineteenth century; the smaller set were made for the east window of the north choir aisle in 1820, and were moved to their present position in 1842. In the second window from the west on the south side is a commemoration of Dr. Card and of his restoration of the church. The smaller coats, alluded to above, are those of the subscribers who contributed to his fund.

On the north-east face of the first pier from the west on the north side of the nave is a small trefoiled niche of the fifteenth century. On the north-west face of the next pier is a specimen of a fifteenth-century tile, another copy of which will be found in the north wall of the apse. The wording upon it is as follows:

Thenke . mon . yi . liffe
mai . not . eu . endure .
yat . yow . dost . yi . self
of . yat . yow . art . sure .

INTERIOR, WEST VIEW

but . yat . yow . kepist .
unto . yi . sectur . cure .
and . eu . hit . availe . ye .
hit . is . but . aventure .

which may be paraphrased in modern English: "Remember, O man, that you will not live for ever. You can be certain of that which you do yourself. But as for that which you reserve for your executor to perform, whether or no he carries out your

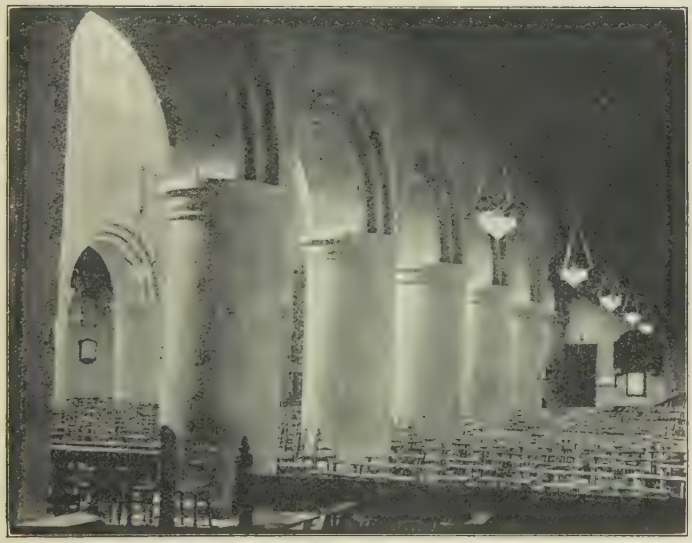
THE NAVE, LOOKING NORTH-WEST

intentions, is a matter of chance." The moral, obviously, is "make your gifts to the Church during your lifetime, lest your executor disregard your wishes," and this tile was set in the face of the pier so as to confront the visitor entering the north door.[1]

The fourth pier from the west, on the same side, bears on its surface a number of "masons' marks," and there are a few on

[1] Other examples of this verse, with some variation in the wording, are not uncommon. One occurs on a tomb in the crypt of Hereford Cathedral.

other piers. One would be loth to cast doubts upon their genuineness, yet their appearance suggests that many of them at least were re-cut when the masonry had been scraped. The east respond of the arcade on this side has an interesting feature; a Norman mason began to ornament the cap with a shallow scallop, but left his work unfinished. The whole of the pier arcade doubtless is coeval with the first building of the church, and the severely simple form of this Norman work is



NAVE PIER-ARCADE AND NORTH AISLE

quite consistent with the date assigned to it by the chroniclers namely, 1085.

The roof of the nave, like those throughout the church, with the exception of the crossing and the choir aisles, is flat[1] and of wood. It is supported by moulded wall-posts resting on stone corbels. Its form is that of the fifteenth century, and a considerable proportion of the ancient timber survives. The roofs,

[1] Except the roof of the last bay westward in the south nave aisle, as noted below.

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unto . yi . sectur . cure .
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however, have been very extensively repaired in the various restorations, and the carved bosses at the intersection of the ribs are modern.

At the west end of the nave stands the **Font**. Its large

THE FONT

circular bowl, without ornament or moulding, is probaby early Norman. The pedestal, base, and step are modern. A brass inserted in the south side of the bowl commemorates the restoration of this font in 1838. In the west wall behind the font is a memorial to Sir H. Lambert, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott.

The **Nave Aisles** provide a striking contrast. The north aisle was entirely refashioned during the fifteenth century, and its original Norman width was doubled. Across the south aisle

SOUTH AISLE OF NAVE

a Perpendicular arch was thrown, sprung, without shafts or corbels, from the south wall to the abacus of the westernmost Norman pier. The Norman south wall was heightened, and a flat panelled roof substituted for the lean-to Norman roof,

except in the westernmost bay, where the new roof was set at the old pitch. Otherwise no changes were made in this south aisle; it could not be widened to correspond with the new north aisle as the cloister adjoined its exterior wall. The Norman doorway to the cloister was left untouched, with windows of the same date set high in the wall. (Three windows in the Perpendicular style, as mentioned in the last chapter, were put in about 1840). The narrow south aisle of to-day, therefore, is of the same width as it was when the church was first built, and it terminates eastward in a Norman arch. (This is now above the vestry screen; originally it gave access to the south transeptal chapel.) This arch is enriched with the chevron ornament on its west face.[1] We may suppose that the Norman west arch of the crossing and the corresponding arch at the east end of the north nave aisle were in line with this surviving Norman arch at the east end of the south nave aisle. The Perpendicular crossing and north aisle arches are set slightly eastward of it.

One of the church's three modern processional banners is kept, when not in use, in a glazed cupboard standing near the east end of the south nave aisle. Its design is taken from a twelfth-century seal of the monastery, and it is a superb specimen of needlecraft. The visitor should not be misled into supposing the memorial brass on the wall just above this cupboard has any connection with the banner: its position makes this misunderstanding a common one. The three windows of the south nave aisle, constructed about 1840, are filled with glass of the same period. This is best passed over in silence.

In the north aisle are five fifteenth-century windows, each of three lights. For some unexplained reason, the cill of the westernmost window is at a higher level than the others. The main portions of the second and fifth (counting from the west end) and the whole of the third are filled with modern stained glass, of which it need only be said that the third (commemorating the 1887 Jubilee) is the most surprising. But the tracery-lights of the other four contain interesting fragments and small complete figures of fifteenth-century glass. The Perpendicular arch leading into the transept has moulded jambs and capitals.

The **North Transept** is described as "the Jesus Chapel"

[1] Two stones bearing the same ornament may be seen on the inner face of the made-up vestry wall.

by Dr. Thomas, writing in 1725, and the name apparently is ancient. In its east wall a considerable amount of Norman

PROCESSIONAL BANNER

masonry may be noticed among the larger blocks of the Perpendicular builders, but it is probably "used-up" material,

employed in the Perpendicular enlargement and rebuilding. On examining the north face of the tower wall (within the church) the line of origin of a former steep-pitched roof to the transept may be discerned. Under the north window are two recesses, now vacant, but evidently designed to contain monuments. The glass, to be described on a later page, is of the year 1502; that of the west window of the transept is about twenty years earlier. Above the arches between the transept and the nave and choir aisles are fifteenth-century square-headed windows, partly filled with nineteenth-century glass of the most virulent type.

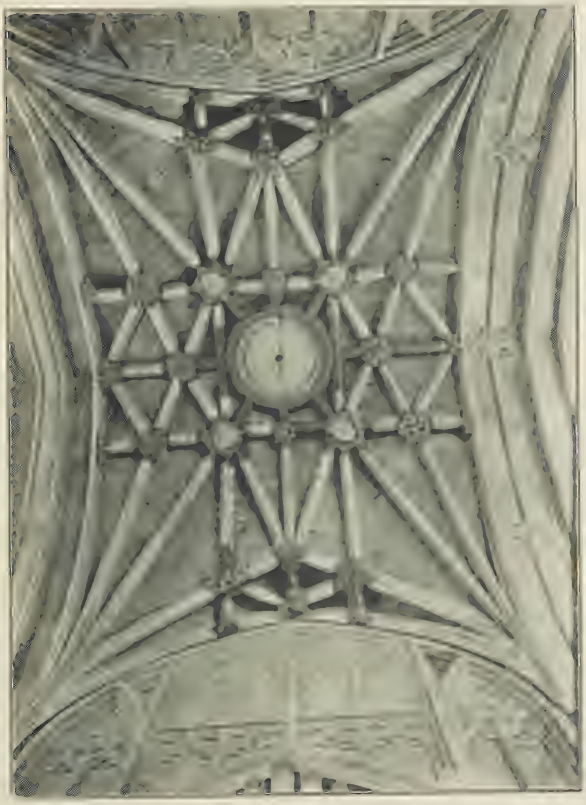
The arches giving entrance from the transepts to the north and south choir aisles should be studied together, and merit close attention. That leading from the north transept is of two chamfered orders, representing a very early type of Perpendicular work. On its south side it springs from an abacus which does not fit the shaft beneath it: this octagonal shaft, with its stilted base, is clearly of later date. The narrow arch at the west entrance of the south choir aisle is even more pronouncedly early. Beneath the corbel from which it springs on the south side, a shaft has been inserted subsequently, perhaps as an additional support, but more probably as mere decoration. Here, then, we seem to have the junction of two styles of Perpendicular employed during the rebuilding of the church. These arches, and possibly also the vaults of the choir aisles, cannot be of a later date than 1400. The reconstruction of the church was complete by July 1460, when the consecration of the altars throughout the building took place, and the bells in the tower were rung[1] to welcome the bishop performing the ceremony. Most of the modern writers have attempted to assign dates to the building in ignorance of the historical records, and basing their opinions upon a rigid system of architectural chronology. They have forgotten that Malvern is throughout most clearly under the influence of Gloucester, and that Gloucester makes mincemeat of the conventional "dates and periods" of architectural handbooks; essentially Perpendicular work being executed there before the fourteenth century had run half its course. Moreover, the Gloucester tower was completed in 1457; the fact that the Malvern tower

[1] *Vide* p. 18, *supra*.

THE CHOIR FROM THE JESUS CHAPEL, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

Note the shaft and capital showing two periods of Perpendicular work.

is so close a copy of it suggests that it was designed by the same hand, and that the masons, having finished the Gloucester



VAULT OF TOWER

tower, came to Malvern and built its tower between 1457 and 1460. Both Gloucester and Malvern were Benedictine houses.

The masonry of the **Tower** is full of interest. First we may notice the beautifully proportioned arches of the crossing.

Those at the east and west are higher than those at the north and south. Moreover, the western arch is deeper than the eastern one, having a panelled soffit between its mouldings. The mouldings spring on each side from five shafts which are based on moulded corbel-tables at a level with the caps of the nave piers. The faces of the wall above the arches north and south of the crossing are decorated with most admirable panelling, and the roof of the crossing has a fine lierne vault (p. 55). The circular space in its centre was probably designed for the passage of the bells from the church to the belfry above; its present appearance is due to the fact that in Victorian days a corona of gas-lights, lighted through a trap-door in the floor of the ringing chamber, was attached to it. The painted heraldic coats attached to the vault-ribs are modern.

The fifteenth-century tower was raised upon the piers of the earlier Norman tower, as the masonry shows. It is easy to distinguish the Norman ashlar from the large blocks, mostly of red sandstone, used in the fifteenth century. The visitor will see that the Norman courses are considerably out of level, inclining downwards from west to east, and that this is the case in all four piers. Various inferences have been drawn from this fact, one of them being that they indicate an extensive settlement which caused the fall of the Norman tower, and thus necessitated the rebuilding of the church's eastern limb. It is true that a large number of Norman towers did fall, but the architectural evidence is against it in this case. Had there been a fall, the courses of masonry would have shown not a gentle and uniform slope, but fracture and dislocation. Again, the uniformity of the slope in all four piers is to the present writer a refutation of the theory that it is the result merely of accident in building, caused by the Norman masons' want of accuracy in setting their courses. More probable does it seem that there was a gentle and uniform settlement eastward before or during the building of the present tower, and the Perpendicular builders have obviously been at special pains to reinforce weak points in the Norman masonry. It has been suggested also that the Norman piers may have run continuously from west to east, there being no archway into the transepts through them. This would account for the consistent inclination of the courses both east and west of the present arches, with which, according to this theory, the Perpendicular builders

pierced the Norman walls. On other grounds, however, the conjecture seems improbable.

The **Pulpit**, of oak, was constructed about 1864. It faces due north, because it is only by standing in this position that

PANELLING UNDER THE SOUTH TOWER ARCH

a preacher can hope to make himself heard, owing to a lack of resonance in the building, and the fact that a considerable proportion of his congregation is seated eastward of the pulpit.

The **Organ**, to which an electrical blowing-apparatus has been fitted in recent years, is a four-manual instrument, built

by Messrs. Nicholson, of Worcester. Its mechanism is now quite out-of-date, and the reconstruction and modernizing of the instrument have long been desirable. But, as often is the

THE CHOIR ARCADE

case with old organs, the tone of much of the flue-work is beautiful.

The eastern limb of the church consists of three bays, with moulded piers, responds, and arches. On the inner face of each

pier five slender shafts, with attached bases, are carried up into the brackets of the wall-posts and the mouldings of the clerestory windows. A wide cavetto separates the shafts. On the other faces of each pier mouldings are carried up through a capital, which is little more than a string, round the arches dividing the choir from its aisles. The fondness of the designer for panelling in the form of window-tracery is strikingly evident in this part of the church. Each clerestory window is composed of ten lights, eight of which are glazed, and two blind.[1] Beneath them are stone panels with cinquefoiled heads, above them is other blind tracery, in wood. The wall-posts, of wood, rest upon moulded stone corbels carried up into what have been deemed the springers of a groined vault. The intention to construct such a vault, however, is doubtful; certainly it would have necessitated flying buttresses without the building, for which there is no sign of preparation. Moreover, the form of these springers, when closely examined, has no real affinity with the character of a vault-springer, but rather shows them to have been designed strictly for their present use, viz., as stone corbels or offsets for the moulded wallposts of the wooden roof.

The presbytery is marked off from the choir by a single step. Just beyond it are the monks' **Stalls**. Of these there are twenty-four, in two rows of six on each side. To each row three modern stalls, making twelve in all, have been added. The ancient stalls are probably of a date approximating to that when the rebuilding of the church was completed—viz., 1460. In all probability their original position was against the inner faces of the tower piers; perhaps ten, with two return stalls, stood on each side. In 1746 Cole noted that "the stalls which formerly surrounded the Choir are now removed into the north aisle."[2] By 1822 they had been placed "on each side of the Chancel."[3] About this time they were smothered in paint, from which even now they are not quite free.

On the under-side of the seats is a most interesting series of misericords. Two have disappeared, but twenty-two of the complete set of twenty-four still remain. In their present order they

[1] It should be noticed that the exterior hood-moulds contain the glazed portions only, so that a view of these windows from outside the building conveys the erroneous impression of their being four-centred.

[2] B.M. Add. MSS., 5811, f. 119.

[3] Southwell's *Description of Malvern*, 1st ed. (1822), p. 37.

have been arranged more or less at random, in days when their symbolism was unknown. There were originally two complete series of twelve each—one set composed of miscellaneous subjects, the other being a Kalendar, depicting the twelve months. The two misericords now missing belong to the latter series, the former being still complete. One of the month-subjects which has not survived is August, almost always represented by some corn-harvest scene. It is more difficult to say which other is lacking, and some doubt must remain as to the "months" of a few of the rest. In some Kalendars, for instance, "sowing" denotes March, in others October: the representation of a swine-herd knocking down acorns belongs sometimes to October and sometimes to November. It will be most convenient to the visitor if these misericords are described in their present sequence. We will take them from west to east:

North side, front row:

1. Man seated at table, holding two cups. *January.*[1]
2. Man weeding, with long-handled shears. Supporters, two pigeons. *April.*
3. Three mice (or rats) engaged in hanging a cat. Supporters, two owls to take warning, being also mice-eaters.
4. Man with scythe, haymaking. *June.*
5. Man carrying large bunch of grapes, basket on arm. *September.*
6. A cockatrice.

North side, back row:

1. Mastiff (?), or Lion ("Leo"). *July* (?).
2. Swineherd, knocking down acorns. Supporters, two boars, with bristled backs. *October.*
3. Carving inverted. Subject partly broken and doubtful. Possibly a drunkard beaten by his wife. Another prone figure seems to be drinking.
4. Two long-necked grotesque figures: one with claws, the other with webbed feet.
5. Wife has been out to draw water. (Pitcher behind.) Husband kneels to take off her boot. Top broken, but apparently she is urging him on by hitting him over the head with a distaff. Probably *February.*[2]
6. Sower, with sack of corn and basket slung over shoulder. Supporters, pigeons waiting to pick up seed. *March.*

[1] Derived from Janus, the two-headed. In some Kalendars the two-headed figure is depicted, with two cups, one for each mouth. Here, as at Ripple, etc., he has only one head, but the two cups are retained.

[2] Usually represented by a domestic scene emphasizing the cold, rain, or mud of this month.

NORTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 1

NORTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 2

NORTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 3

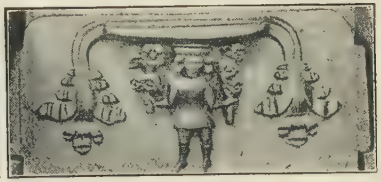
NORTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 4

NORTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 5

NORTH SIDE BACK, NO. 1

NORTH SIDE BACK, NO. 2

SOUTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 5



SOUTH SIDE FRONT, NO. 6

SUBJECTS FROM THE STALL-SEATS

South side, front row:

1. A mummer's mask. Supporters, two heads; might almost be Comedy and Tragedy!
2. A "study from life." Note long hair and round cap, both characteristic of the Malvern misericords; *cf.* the Jan., Oct., and May subjects.
3. Man killing ox (pole-axe broken). *December.*
4. Angel, in cope, playing cithern.
5. A wyvern.
6. Man bearing bunches of flowers in Rogationtide procession. *May.*

South side, back row:

1. Two grotesques, one with hooded human head, one with duck's head. (Friar and layman satire?)
2. Merman with mirror; mermaid with comb.
3. Sick man in bed, supported by his wife. Doctor examines urine-flask.
4. Woman driving away demon with pair of bellows.

Small grotesque carvings, most of which are much worn, terminate the arms of the stalls. The westernmost in the front row of the north side depicts a hooded fox's head; a common form of satire, usually aimed at the friars.[1]

Between a portion of the choir aisles on each side and the choir is a parclose screen; its cornice has a design of grapes, admirably carved. We may feel tolerably certain that these beams come from the ancient rood-screen of the church.

Four wide and sloping steps lead from the choir to the sanctuary. The tiles covering them are bad nineteenth-century imitations of the mediaeval patterns, but the arrangement of the steps is ancient.

On the right side of the sanctuary, resting on the roof of the sunk chantry of the south choir aisle, is the Knotsford monument. John Knotsford, whose family already had resided in

[1] It may be well to guard future students against following up a false trail, which misled the present writer. In the *Sede Vacante Register* of 1302, p. 13, as summarized in the Worcs. Hist. Soc. volume, reference is made to a dispute between "the *Friars Minor* of Malvern" and J. de Feckenham. Again, in the *Bishop Ginsborough Register*, p. 12 (same edition), a document is summarized as a "prohibition to the prior and convent of *Friars Minor* of Malvern" against alienating property without the Bishop's consent. These references to a settlement of Friars Minor (*i.e.*, Franciscans) at Malvern seemed new and most interesting. But further inquiry proved that each entry is simply a translator's blunder. In each case the reference is not "*fratres minores* Malverniae" but "fratres *minoris Malverniae*"—*i.e.*, the monks of Little Malvern, a Benedictine house and cell of Worcester.

Malvern,[1] bought from William Pinnock, in 1545, land which had belonged to the dissolved Priory. His wife Jane was buried on 26 October 1582. Knotsford died on 24 November and was buried on 28 November 1596. This monument was erected by their eldest daughter, Anne; four of the five daughters are represented on the north and south faces of the monument: Anne is the large figure kneeling at a *prie-dieu* at the foot[2] of the tomb

THE KNOTSFORD MONUMENT: WINDOWS OF S. ANNE'S CHAPEL IN BACKGROUND

on which are likenesses of her parents. Anne married William Savage; she and her son John Savage gave one of the bells, in the year 1611, which still hangs in the tower. The three figures, of alabaster, supply excellent examples of Elizabethan costume. Part of Anne Savage's *prie-dieu*, which contained the inscription

[1] The Parish Registers record the marriage of an Elizabeth Knotsford in 1556. The dates that follow are also taken from the Registers.

[2] *Temp.* Habington (*circa* 1630), and until about 1840, this figure was at the head of the tomb.

relating to her, is lost. But the inscription, like a very large number of others which also have disappeared from the church, is recorded at length in Dr. Thomas's volume of 1725.

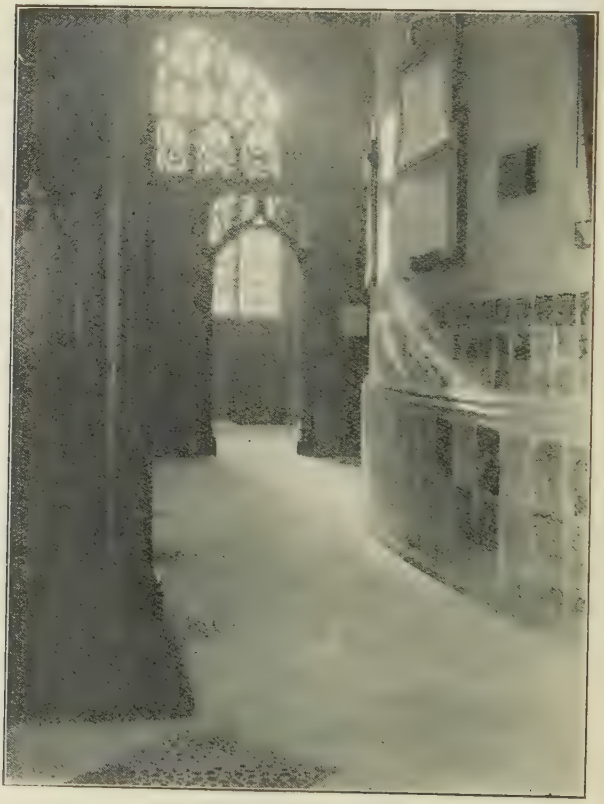
Opposite the Knotsford monument, on a modern plinth, is the recumbent figure of a knight, without inscription. The figure is much mutilated, but old drawings show that he held a pick in his right hand, an oval shield in his left. The character of his mail fixes the date within the first half of the twelfth century. This monument, which Habington described as one "with a show of extraordinary antiquitie," stood in his days against the south wall of the south choir aisle; Dr. Thomas' plan shows that it was still there about a century later; early in the nineteenth century it was moved into the north transept; thence it has been brought to its present position. The figure has been identified as a member of the families of Brompton or Corbet, but with no real evidence for either view.

Behind the present altar (given in 1909) is a reredos in glass mosaic, put up in 1884. Both ends of the stone screen behind the altar are covered with mural tiles of the years 1453 and 1456. These will be noticed in the following chapter.

On each side of the altar is a circular-headed door, with square label, giving entrance to a small segmental recess lying between the altar-screen and the curved apse wall. Its position and the double entrance suggest that this may have been the feretory, where were kept the relics[1] which the monastery possessed. On days when the relics were exposed, pilgrims would enter by one door, make their obeisance before the reliquary, and emerge by the other. This chamber is partly paved with fifteenth-century tiles. On the face of the inner wall and set in the floor are eight monumental stones, removed from other parts of the church. Most of them commemorate members of the Lygon family, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and have elaborate inscriptions. One of them, with an inscription running round the edge commemorating Penelope Walwyn (*née* Lygon, *ob.* 1596) was formerly the slab or *mensa* of a very ornate altar-tomb, which was decorated with thirty-five coats of arms. Habington (ii, 179) describes it as "erected at the east end of the quyre," and Thomas (1725) says that "it stood formerly where now is the Lord's Table."

[1] *E.g.*, the alleged relics of S. Edburga (*vide* p. 6, *supra*).

The curved wall of the apse, though of fifteenth-century construction, probably follows the line of its Norman predecessor.



AMBULATORY AND WALL OF APSE, WITH ENTRANCE TO ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL

Its cornice is pierced by four trefoiled "squints," so placed as to command a view of the sanctuary lamps of the Lady Chapel and the chapels terminating the choir aisles. Presumably at the date of their construction the apse wall was either higher than its

SOUTH CHOIR AISLE (ST. ANNE' CHAPEL)

present level or bore some form of canopy. Otherwise these squints would have been superfluous, since anyone of average stature who stands within the chamber can look with ease over the apse wall.

The **north and south Choir Aisles** closely resemble each other in general design. Each has a simple stone vault with plainly chamfered diagonal and transverse ribs of very early Perpendicular character, with interesting stone bosses of the period at the western springs. The north and south walls are divided into three bays apiece, the whole width of each bay being occupied by a ten-light traceried window, two lights of which are blind. Below each window are twelve panels, those in the north aisle being trefoiled, and those in the south quatrefoiled. The panelling on the south wall is particularly good, and has the advantage of being comparatively little restored.

The north aisle was termed "the Vicar's Chapel" in the early days of the nineteenth century; part of it, apparently, was then utilized as a vestry. The sanctuary in which it terminates, though rectangular externally, shows within traces of the apsidal form which it possessed before the Perpendicular reconstruction. The altar-space is now largely occupied by the Thompson monument of 1828, the work of the sculptor Hollins; this was placed originally in the north transept. Against the south wall is a panelled fifteenth-century piscina, above which is a trefoiled niche. The wall-bracket on the north side should be noticed, because it is finished with a roughly-carved ball-flower—the one fragment of "Decorated" ornament perhaps still *in situ* in the church. On a bookstand at this end are two chained volumes –a Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer, of William and Mary's reign, and an Elizabethan copy of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. The bookstand is probably older than either of these volumes, and may have been used originally for a chained Bible. The glass of the east window and the tiles beneath it were inserted in 1842 in memory of the Prince Consort; they represent, all too faithfully, the artistic taste of his age.

A wide ambulatory running round the apse wall connects the north choir aisle with the south, known as St. Anne's Chapel. The wooden screen between the ambulatory and St. Anne's Chapel is less than a century old, but is a good piece of work. The chapel is fitted up and used for week-day services.

Its eastern window is by Kempe, and was put in to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. The jambs and tracery of

NORTH CHOIR AISLE

this window are also modern. On either side of it are ancient image-brackets, with grotesque figures, probably of the fifteenth century. The piscina, of the same period, is far more inter-

esting, because far less restored than the corresponding one in the north choir aisle. On the north of the altar is the blocked headway of the stairs which led to the crypt. The altar-table

CHAINED BOOKS

is Jacobean; despite its small dimensions, it served for many years as the high altar of the church, standing within the central sanctuary.

On the north side of St. Anne's Chapel is a small sunk chantry of two bays, which has a charming miniature fan-

traceried roof. At the back, under cusped arches, are two recesses for coffins. The inscribed stone coffin-lids now on the floor of this chantry are not in their original positions. One of them is that of Walcher, the second prior of the monastery. It was disinterred in 1711 from ground adjoining the south transeptal chapel, and the inscription, obviously, must have been re-cut. It runs:

Philosophvs dignvs, bonvs astrologvs, Lotheringvs,
Vir pivs ac hvmilis, monachvs, prior hvivs ovilis,
Hic jacet in cista, geometricvs ac abacista,
Doctor Walchervs; flet plebs, dolet vndiqve clervs;
Hvic lvx prima mori dedit Octobris seniori;
Vivat vt in coelis exoret qvisqve fidelis. MCXXV.

Beside it is the mutilated coffin-slab of William de Wykewane, the prior round whose election raged the fierce controversy of 1282. The Lombardic lettering has escaped renovation. In its fragmentary condition it reads:

. . . lelmus . de . Wikewana
. . . . . Xro . nunc . reqviescat
Tu . ver . . . a . lector . sta . perlege . plora .
. s . mod . . . t . prior . hic: eris . ipse . qvod . exstat.

A conjectural restoration of the last line may be suggested:

Es mod*o tu quod erat* prior hic: eris ipse quod exstat.

A large collection of other fragments found in various excavations are now stored in this chantry—some thirty bosses, of very different periods, many of which are quite admirable; two pairs of engaged Early English capitals, and fragments of their shafts and bases; mouldings of various dates, including some with ball-flower ornament, and tiles of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANCIENT GLASS AND TILES

The ancient stained glass now in Great Malvern Priory Church is but a remnant of that which once glorified its forty windows. Yet the portion remaining represents a possession which few parish churches can equal. Almost all of it, with the exception of one window (the north window of the Jesus Chapel, which is of the year 1502), belongs to the period 1460-1485: a very few fragments of older glass survive. The period named, however, was the age when this craft reached its highest point in England—and the Malvern glass throughout is characteristically English. In the sixteenth century the panes became more opaque, the colouring assumed a more enamel-like surface. In the fifteenth century the makers realized that the first business of a window is to admit light. The wonderful brilliance of the Malvern glass, with its few and pure colours and silvery canopies, may be noticed even on a dull day. And the effect of the great east window when lighted by the sun in the early morning is one which no one who has seen it will forget.

Thanks to the fairly complete inventory made by Habington within a century of the monastery's dissolution, and subsequent lists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is possible to learn not only what was the glass now lost, but where the glass yet remaining was originally placed. Only a small proportion of it occupies its earliest position in the church. But to trace these changes would require more space than can be given in this volume. Again, much of the glass is now quite fragmentary. Many even of the complete figures are so minute that the subjects can be discerned only with the aid of field-glasses. The use of this assistance is strongly recommended; the student will be amazed by the beauties it reveals. But to catalogue the fragments and details is impossible here. The visitor will be best served, probably, by a list of the chief

subjects in each window. The order in which the subjects are named will be from left to right.

The **West Window**; large figures (most of them originally in nave clerestory):

Top row:

1. St. Christopher carrying the child Christ.
2. The Virgin and Child.
3. St. Lawrence with gridiron.

Second row:

1. St. George and Dragon.
2. Principality.[1]
3. An Archbishop blessing.
4. St. Maria Jacobi, with St. James and St. John as children. (A charming picture. The future Evangelist holds a pen as large as himself; St. James already wears his palmer's hat.)

Bottom row:

1. A mitred Abbot (Benedictine).[2]
2. Bishop (broken), St. Martin.
3. Bishop, St. Leger (Leodegarius).
4. Cherub.
5. St. Katharine with wheel.
6. St. Nicholas.
7. St. Edmund.

In a quatrefoil on the left an angel bears a shield with the reputed arms of Edward the Confessor—*azure*, a cross flory, between five martlets, *or* and in the corresponding quatrefoil on the other side is a broken shield exhibiting two keys in saltire impaling on a chief indented a mitre and a pastoral staff, both these coats being among those used by Westminster Abbey.

In the north transept (Jesus Chapel).

The **North Window**. This beautiful window is much damaged. Its lower lights were blown out by a storm about

[1] The celestial beings were divided into three hierarchies, each of three orders, viz:

1. *Contemplative:* Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones.
2. *Regulative:* Dominions, Virtues, Powers.
3. *Administrative:* Principalities, Archangels, Angels.

A set depicting these nine orders were formerly in the nave clerestory. Two of the set are now in the west window, five in the south clerestory windows of the choir, two are lost.

[2] As the Benedictine black habit could not be reproduced in stained glass, this beautiful shade of blue became the conventional representation of it.

1720. It has suffered much subsequently. In order to study its surviving panels and its fragments intelligently, the visitor must know something of its original design. It may be termed the "Virgin Mary window." The tracery was filled chiefly with female saints. Immediately above the cill, following the customary arrangement, were the figures of "benefactors," in this case Henry VII (probably the donor), his Queen, Prince Arthur, Bray, Savage, and Lovell, in the order named, from right to left. Three of the central lights above the transom had a vesica, with the crowning of the Blessed Virgin by the three Persons of the Trinity. On the exterior of the vesica were patriarchs contemplating the crowning. The fourth central light above the transom and the four central ones beneath it held two scenes each (with the crowning), representing eleven "joys of Mary," the usual number being seven. Those above the transom represented extra-terrestrial (the crowning, the descent into Hades, and the Ascension), and the eight below the transom terrestrial scenes in the life of her Son. Each had an inscription beginning "Gaude," summarizing the scene, and also a verse from the Magnificat. It has been suggested by Mr. Rushforth that the four outer lights contained the four archangels—Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel. This brief outline takes no account of the small figures in the cuspings and other details. But it may suffice to guide the visitor in studying the fragments: he will discern many bits of the "Gaude" inscriptions, of verses from the Magnificat, of the four benefactors (other than the two still *in situ*) and of incomplete pictures. He should be careful to examine the blue vesica with a pair of good glasses, when its exquisite diaper work will become apparent.

A list of the principal subjects in a tolerably complete state is added. They are taken, as usual, from left to right:

Tracery lights, right centre near top:

St. Katharine.

Tracery lights, lower row:

1. St. Mary Magdalene with covered cup.
2. St. Barbara with tower.
3. St. Cecilia (?).
4. St. Agnes (?) with palm and book.

Main lights above transom:

1. Fragments.
2. (*a*) the Ascension; (*b*) the preaching in Hades.
3, 4, 5. Vesica enclosing crowning of the B.V.M. (broken), on left patriarchs—Adam with spade, David with harp, Noah with ship (= ark); on right, Moses, Abraham.

The vesica was placed out of the centre of the window so that the space within it should not be broken by a mullion. Below the vesica are these lines—the words are now out of their order, and some of them are upside down:

Gaude fruens deliciis
Tu rosa juncta lilio;
Nos munda a viciis,
Et tuo junge Filio.

6. (*a*) St. Anne and angel (from another window).
(*b*) Adoration of Magi (from another window).

Six lights below transom:

1 and 2. Fragments. In cusping of 2, crowned head of Henry VII.
3. (*a*) Christ seated among the doctors; (*b*) the Visitation; (*c*) Sir Reginald Bray (note name on edge of book).
4. (*a*) Miracle at Cana; (*b*) Nativity; (*c*) Prince Arthur.
5. Fragments.
6. Probably Uriel. Inscription on base, "St. Ambrose," is an insertion.

In the spandrils of this window, and repeated scores of times through the windows of the church, are the words from Ps. xxxi, 7, "Lactabor in misericordia." They seem to have been the motto of Richard Dene, Prior 1457-1472.

West window of north transept.

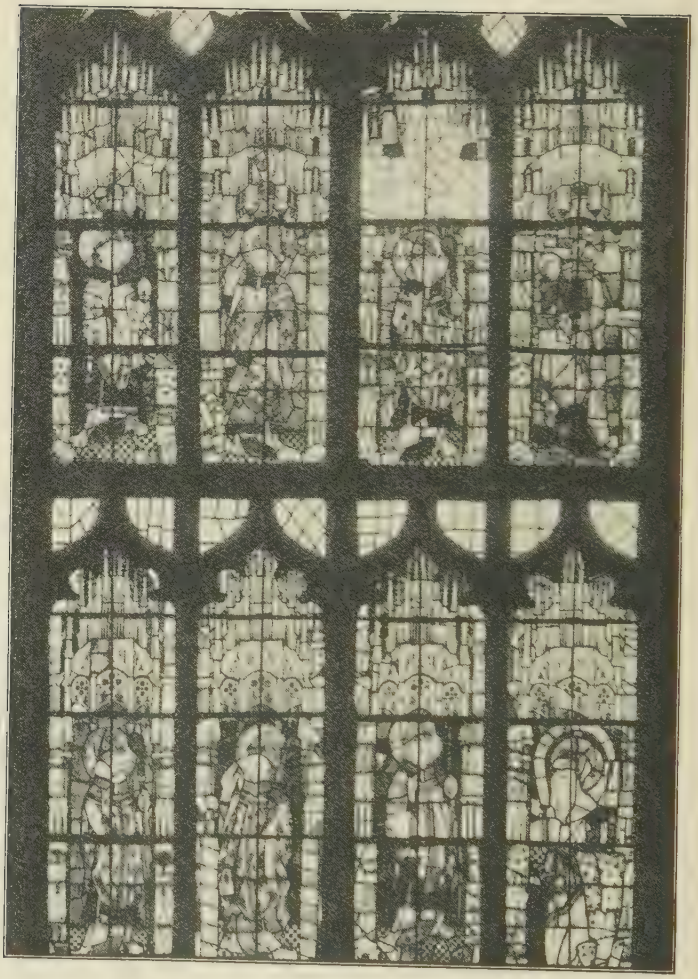
Large lights above transom:

1. St. Paul.
2. St. John with palm and chalice.
3. St. John Baptist.

Below transom, taking the subjects from left to right in horizontal bands:

Top row:
1. Visitation.
2. Annunciation.
3. Nativity. (Beauty of detail deserves special notice.)

Second row:
1. Healing dumb man ("Ephphatha").
2. Marriage of Joseph and Mary (?).
3. A miracle of healing.



GLASS IN NORTH CHOIR CLERESTORY (NO. 2)

Third row:

1. Christ surrounded by sick folk.
2. The Last Supper.
3. The Presentation (note doves in basket).

At bottom, fragments of benefactors, etc.

North clerestory of Choir.

No. 1 (*westernmost*) *window.*[1]

Four lights above transom:

1. Consecration of site of Werstan's chapel. Werstan below.
2. Consecration of the chapel. Werstan below.
3. Edward the Confessor hands sealed charter to an ecclesiastic.
4. Martyrdom of Werstan. Below, his followers at windows of chapel. Tormentors at sides.

Note the beautiful heads in spandrils.

Four lights below transom:

1. Monks, headed by Aldwin, receive grant outside the monastery church from "Osbernus Pontius."
2. William, Earl of Gloucester, and Bernard, Earl of Hereford, delivering charter. Two monks behind table in background.
3. Bishop Wulfstan hands sealed charter to Aldwin.
4. William the Conqueror hands sealed charter to Aldwin.

The representation of the Conqueror as bearded is unusual.

No. 2 *window.*

Four lights above transom:[2]

1. St. Dunstan (Archbishop).
2. St. Edmund (Archbishop).
3. Bishop Wulfstan.
4. The Virgin and Child.

Four lights below transom:

1, 2, 3. Three bishops. Records of inscriptions now lost show that two of the three are St. Oswald and St. Blaise. There is no means of identifying these from the three, or of knowing who is depicted by the remaining figure.

4. St. Anne. Lower half of figure is reversed. Round head is scroll inscribed: "Anna parens prolem mulierum munere florem."

[1] For an account of this window, *vide* chap. i, p. 4, *supra.*

[2] The name of Dunstan (broken) is glazed, almost vertically, on right, just below the lowest saddle-bar. The remaining three names are *in situ* at the foot of each light; the transom makes them invisible from the floor level.

No. 3 window.

Four lights above transom:

1, 2. The Annunciation. 1. Gabriel. Scroll, "gratia plena, Dominus tecum." 2. The Virgin, towards whom dove flies.
3, 4. The Presentation. 3. The Virgin carrying Child. Two women in background, one carrying taper. 4. Simeon behind altar, wearing mitre; Child on altar with dove in His hand.

Four lights below transom:

1. Angel speaks to Joachim.
2. Meeting of Joachim and Anne at Golden Gate.
3. St. Anne and woman holding infant Virgin in bed. Below, scroll "O felix Anna, pro me ad Christum exora," and (broken) small figure of Benedictine.[1]
4. Fragments.

The great East Window.

This is mainly composed of fragments, so numerous and small that a description of them here is impossible. In the tracery lights a beautiful figure of the Virgin, seated and crowned, should be noticed. Below, tolerably complete, is a row of Apostles as follows: On left of mullion: 1. John; 2. Andrew; 3. James the Great; 4. Peter; 5. Thomas; 6. (broken) Philip. On right of mullion: 7. Bartholomew (fragment); 8. Matthew; 9. Jude; 10. Matthias or Simon. Immediately below the Apostles, on the extreme left, is a beautiful picture of the Triumphal Entry. Note the porteullised gate, from the top of which figures, in quaint head-dresses, are throwing flowers in our Lord's path. On the right of this scene is the Last Supper. Elsewhere portions of other scenes of the Passion will be recognized—the mocking, the scourging, the crucifixion, the deposition from the cross, etc. At a lower level is a row of kneeling benefactors. The glass now in this window includes fragments from almost every window of the church.

[1] Habington mentions that in his day the window contained in one of the bottom panels the figure of John Malvern, prior in 1435, with the inscription: "Orate pro anima Johannis Malvern, qui istam fenestram fieri fecit." The early date is remarkable, and J. Malvern was no longer prior in 1449. Probably he bequeathed money for the glazing of the window. It is possible that the broken figure mentioned above, which corresponds in position with Habington's account, is that of John Malvern.

GLASS IN NORTH CHOIR CLERESTORY (NO. 3)

South Clerestory of Choir.

No. 1 (*westernmost*) *window.*

In tracery on left, arms of Berkeley; on right, arms of Edward V.

Four lights above transom:

1. Arms of Richard III. (From the original west window of church, which he gave.)
2. A female Saint.
3. An archbishop blessing.
4. Fragments.

Four lights below transom:

1. Virtue.
2. Seraph.
3. Power.
4. Dominion.

} From set of "nine orders"; *vide* p. 73, *supra.*

No. 2 *window.*

Four lights above transom:

1. Head of St. James the Great.
2. St. Katharine.
3. Benedictine Abbot.
4. St. James the Great holding open book; on right page the words "Amen dico vobis."

Four lights below transom:

1. Angel (from set of nine orders).
2. St. John supporting the swooning Virgin.
3. The Crucifixion.
4. Centurion with scroll, "vere filius dei erat iste."

The beautiful design and modelling in the Crucifixion panel merit special attention. Four angels catch the sacred Blood in chalices. Skull and bones (typifying "Golgotha") and dog near base of cross. The figure of our Lord is exquisitely drawn.

No. 3 *window.*

Made up chiefly of angels, shields with emblems of the Passion (from tracery lights), and fragments. On left and right, below transom, two large figures of St. Andrew and St. Peter. Near the centre are two small figures of a Pope and a Cardinal. The spandrils of this and the other windows contain scrolls with the motto "Laetabor in misericordia" noted above.

PANEL IN SOUTH CHOIR CLERESTORY (NO. 2)

South Choir Aisle (St. Anne's Chapel).

The three windows in the south wall are now occupied by a most interesting series of Old Testament scenes. Originally there were no fewer than seventy-two of them, when they were placed in the south clerestory of the nave. Fragments of many are glazed in the other windows of the church. Thirty-three are now in the St. Anne's chapel windows, and they are admirable no less for their fine detail than for the beauty of their colouring.

Window No. 1 (*easternmost*).

Top row:

1. The Creator plans the world with a pair of compasses.
2. Creation of sun, moon, and stars.
3. Creation of birds and fishes. (Fish in Creator's right hand.)
4. Creation of animals.

Middle row:

1. Creation of Adam.
2. Creation of Eve (emerging from Adam's side).
3. Prohibition of the fruit of the Tree.
4. The Fall.

Bottom row:

1. The Rebuke.
2. The Expulsion.
3. The Toil. (Adam digging; Eve with baby on her knee.)
4. Fragments, including a Passion-shield from tracery.

WINDOW (NO. 1) ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL

Window No. 2 (central).

Top row:

1. God appears to Noah.
2. Animals approaching the Ark; birds flying towards it; Noah holds an antelope in his arm.
3. Noah and his wife about to enter Ark. Steps leading to Ark.
4. The Ark on the Flood.

Middle row:

1. The sacrifice after the Flood.
2. Noah plants vines.
3. Drunkenness of Noah.
4. The Tower of Babel.

FROM A WINDOW (NO. 2) IN ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL

Bottom row:

1. God appears to Abraham. (Note beautiful diaper work of angels in background.)
2. Sarah tells Abraham that she will bear a son.
3. Circumcision of Isaac.
4. The command to sacrifice Isaac.

Window No. 3 (westernmost).

Top row:

1. Abraham and Isaac journeying to Mount Moriah.
2. Prohibition of the sacrifice.
3. A marriage; probably Isaac and Rebekah.
4. Isaac blessing Esau; Rebekah in background.

Middle row:

1. Two scenes in one picture; Joseph (*a*) being stripped; (*b*) being lowered into pit.
2. Joseph meets his father and his brethren.
3. Finding of the infant Moses by daughter of Pharaoh. (A particularly beautiful picture; note Nile with wickerwork cradle, and palace in background.)
4. The fall of the manna.

Bottom row:

1. Worship of the Golden Calf.
2. People drinking the water into which the dust of the Golden Calf had been thrown. (Ex. xxxii, 20). A Rabbinic legend related that those who had worshipped the calf turned yellow on drinking the water. This panel follows the legend: a man with yellow beard is being executed.
3. Fragments of inscriptions belonging to Old Testament panels which have disappeared. That at the top reads "Sompniavit Joseph"; therefore the sheaves, evidently belonging to the picture thus described by the inscription, have been glazed beside it.
6. Fragments; including two passion-shields (one of St. Veronica's vernicle); a Jew spitting (from some scene of the mocking of Christ); etc.

In the tracery lights above occurs the name of St. Chad; the use of the English form in fifteenth-century glass is remarkable.

Some charming fragments of the ancient glass are to be seen in the cuspings and tracery-lights of the windows in the north choir aisle, and in the tracery-lights of those in the north aisle of the nave.

Probably no other church in England has so large a collection of mediaeval mural and floor tiles as Great Malvern Priory. As has been mentioned above, they were manufactured within the monastery's precincts. Habington mentions them as covering "the eastern and upper parts of the faire Quire of the Greater Malvern"; Cole adds that the semicircular apse wall "is covered both before and behind extreamly high from top to bottom by yellow Tiles with ye arms of several of ye Nobility."[1] We learn

[1] In Mr. Way's MS. notes is a reference to the Antiquaries' Society Minutes, p. 153: "Bp. Lyttelton, Sept. 22, 1752, 'The back part of the choir wall is faced ten feet high with painted tiles.'"

also that the floor of the Jesus Chapel and the sides of various monuments were formerly decorated with tiles. At present there are still over a thousand in the church, comprising about a hundred different patterns.

They are to be found at the north and south ends of the altar screen and along the outer face of the apse wall: a few, out of

TILES ON THE WALL OF THE APSE

sight, are also within this wall. A few of the floor tiles occupy their original positions in the recess behind the altar and in the floor of the sunk chantry. To make the list complete, it should be added that there are portions of detached tiles in the chantry just mentioned and in the porch room. And a warning should be given which experience has proved to be less needless than it might appear—namely, that the tiles set in the west wall, the sides of the sanctuary, and the floors of the church are not

mediaeval, but ugly nineteenth-century imitations of the ancient designs.

Of the mural tiles, there are several sets. They were intended to be placed in vertical bands, varying in number from two to six, the border-work of each running into that of the tiles above and below it, a band marking the base of the lowest of the series. Unfortunately, however, this scheme has often been unrecognized in placing the tiles in their present positions; tiles forming one of a set have been placed in a wrong order, or quite apart from the rest of the series. One set, for example, should have at the top a tile dated 1453, and below—each tile bearing two coats side by side—the arms of (1) *England* and *Westminster* (a cross flory between five martlets); (2) *Bohun* (a bend cotised between two six lioncels) and *Mortimer* (barry of eight, two pallets in chief, between two esquires, an inescutcheon ermine); (3) *Clare* (three chevrons) and *Beauchamp of Warwick* (a fess between six cross crosslets); (4) *Despenser* (quarterly, second and third fretté, over all a bendlet; and *Beauchamp of Powyke* (a fess between six martlets); (5) *Skull of Wichenford* (a bend voided between six lions' heads erased), and *Stafford of Grafton* (a chevron with a canton ermine). Many of these coats will be found also in four-tile sets, with circular borders. Other arms occurring on many of the tiles are those of *Talbot* (a talbot sejant) and *Bracy* (a fess, in chief two pierced mullets).

On the lower face of the wall in the second choir bay (north side) are arranged, below the string, another set of mural tiles; these are placed in varying sets of five, but in reality the set includes six. At the head is a crowned M. (for "Maria"), at the foot are two traceried panels. The intervening subjects are each enclosed in an octagonal border; they consist of the crowned sacred monogram; the arms of England (quartering those of France); the arms of Westminster (Edward the Confessor) and symbols of the Passion. The last-named symbols are displayed also on tiles of other patterns. Another set consists of two tiles only, of greater width than the others; at the head is the date 1453. A fourth set is dated the thirty-sixth year of Henry VI, *i.e.*, 1456.

Next to the central pier, on its east side, will be noticed a vertical band of small square tiles; these are of an earlier date than the rest, belonging to the fourteenth century. A little further are two other early tiles; one with a fish (an ancient

symbol of our Lord) and another with an oak-leaf and acorns. A third bears a double-headed eagle. A small square fifteenth-century tile has the inscription: "Mentem sanctam, spontaneum honorem Deo, et patrie liberacionem"— an excellent aspiration, which also was supposed to serve as a spell against fire. A

A SET OF FLOOR TILES

very interesting set of four makes up what is known as the "lepers' tile": the tradition being that tiles of this pattern were given to lepers, who held the tile before them as they sat by the roadside, entreating the alms of the charitable. Certainly the inscription (from the book of Job) would be appropriate for this use: "Miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, quia manus

Domini tetigit me." This tile also bears the date 1453, and has on it the names of the Evangelists—curiously enough, in the order Mark, Matthew, Luke, John; a remarkable prevision of modern critical results.

Near the eastern end of the central bay will be noticed a tile on which the letters WHILLAR are roughly impressed; probably a fragment of a workman's name. Adjoining this to the east are the arms of the Diocese of Worcester, with mitres in the lower corners. The Stafford device (the Stafford knot issuing from the hub of a wheel) will also be noticed, and a tile bearing a most beautiful geometrical design, almost resembling a spider's web.

It has been possible here to name only a few of the very large number of tiles, but the whole of them well deserve careful study, representing, as they do, a characteristic and beautiful form of mediaeval craftsmanship.

CHAPTER V

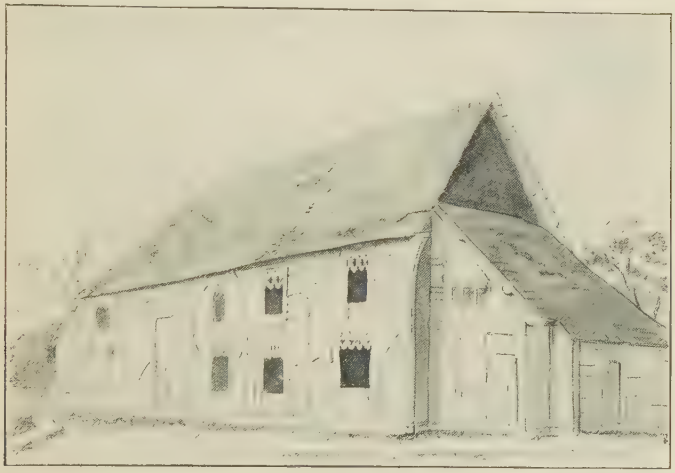
MISCELLANEOUS ADDENDA

The **bells**. These are ten in number; a ring of eight, with two others. The oldest is not included in the ring, but is chimed for weekday services, and has an admirable tone. Round it, in widely-spaced Lombardic capitals, is the inscription: "Virginis egregie vocor campana Marie." This bell is of the fourteenth century. The ancient sanctus-bell of the monastery has also been preserved, and is in use as the "five minutes" bell on Sundays. There is no ornament or inscription upon it, so that its age cannot be determined. Of the eight bells of the ring, two are dated 1611; both bear the initials "I.H." and "E.H."; one has also the names of its donors: "An Saveg, John Saveg" – *i.e.*, Anne Savage, the daughter of John and Jane Knotsford, whose monument is within the church, and Sir John Savage, her eldest son. Three others are of the reign of Queen Anne, are dated 1706 and 1707, and bear the inscriptions: "Prosperity to all our benefactors"; "God save the Queen and Church"; "Richard Leeth and Edmund Gifford, Churchwardens." The three remaining bells are modern, and commemorate the 1887 Jubilee. At this time it was actually proposed to melt down the fourteenth century Virgin Mary Bell, and to utilize the metal for one of the new bells. It had even been removed from the tower for this purpose. Fortunately, a vigorous protest was made by Mr. James Nott, a Malvern tradesman deeply interested in the antiquities of the Priory church, and the disaster was averted.[1]

[1] It is a pleasure to pay this tribute to the memory of the late Mr. Nott. His love of the Priory church was the fruit of long study, and he wrote two books on the subject. A man of little leisure, engaged in trade, he possessed, as he modestly avers in the preface to his first volume, very little historical or archaeological knowledge, and his work abounds in blunders. But he had the true spirit of reverence for ancient buildings, when that spirit was less common than it is to-day. Moreover, with all their errors, his books are full of interesting facts. Above all, the man who saved Malvern's fourteenth-century bell from destruction deserves to be remembered with gratitude.

Both in the ringing-chamber and the belfry the massive beams running round the walls should be noticed. They have mortise-holes, and some of them are moulded; evidently they come from the domestic buildings of the convent. An upright in the belfry bears the inscription I.S:, R.W: 1674; evidently the initials of the churchwardens and the date when this timber was utilized for its present purpose.

The **porch room** is not included in the 1541 receipt for the



THE GUESTEN HALL, DESTROYED IN 1841
From a sketch before demolition

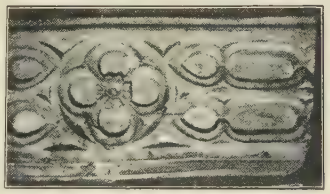
purchase-money which obtained for the parishioners "the church and tower, the chancel, together with the aisles and chapels within the said church"; it seems to have passed into private ownership, and so remained until 1849, when the parishioners acquired it for £100. Mr. Nott, writing in 1885, stated that "there are persons living who have drunk and feasted in it, and have there danced Sir Roger de Coverley and other merry jigs." In Parker's "Concise Glossary" (1st ed., 1846) it is said, upon unknown authority, that the porch room "at Great Malvern was long a depository for wills." Since 1909, when it was cleared of lumber,

it has been used as a chapter house, so to speak, for the meetings of the clerical staff, and made to serve also as a church museum and library.

INTERIOR OF THE GUESTEN HALL.
From a sketch

On the walls are some beautiful traceried window-heads, of oak; these are the only fragments surviving of the Priory's Guesten Hall. Its character can be judged in some degree from

the accompanying sketches, made shortly before its destruction in 1841. It was constructed throughout of wood, and dated approximately from the year 1400. The interior dimensions were 76 feet by 14. Mr. J. H. Parker declared its roof to be, of its period, "the finest example that existed in this or any other country." In the early years of the nineteenth century it was used as a barn, and its destruction, accomplished in order to provide a site for a boarding-house, does not seem to have aroused any protest. It stood at right angles to the church, outside the south-west corner of the cloister, on the ground now occupied by Knotsford Lodge. The few traceried window-heads surviving show a magnificently bold sweep of the carver's tool. One of the beams still has traces of the ancient colouring.



BEAM FROM THE GUESTEN HALL

A glazed case in the porch room contains an interesting collection of charters, being mainly the title-deeds of charity lands conveyed to the parish church. They range in date from the time of Edward III to that of Elizabeth. Only two of the seals are still in good condition. These documents were found by the present writer among some bundles of early nineteenth-century churchwardens' receipts. He was fortunate enough to find also a detached statement of churchwardens' accounts for the year 1665 (when the total expenditure for the year was but a trifle over £11); a contract for repairing the frame-work of the bells and making five new bell-wheels (the total payment being £4) of the year 1637, and other documents, now kept in this case.

CHARTER WITH SEALS

In the porch room also are thirty-one volumes bequeathed to his successors in the Vicarage by the Rev. John Webb, incum-

Thomas de Bredone.
William de Wykewane.
William de Ledbury, elected 1279, deposed 1282, reinstated 1283, again deposed 1287.
Richard de Eston, elected 1287, died 1300.
Hugh de Wyke, occurs 1305 and 1314.
Thomas de Leigh, 1340, died 1349.
John de Painswick, elected 1349, died 1361.
Simon Bysley, elected 1361.
Richard Rolle, elected 1397.
John Malvern, 1435.
J. Bennet, occurs 1449.
Richard Mathon, resigned 1457.
Richard Dene, elected 1457, occurs 1471.
Richard Frewen.
Maculinus Ledbury, occurs 1503.
Thomas Kegworth, occurs 1511.
Thomas Dyrham, occurs 1533 and November 1538.
Richard Whitborn, *alias* Bedyll, occurs December 1538 and receives pension January 1539-40.

Vicars of Malvern[1]

I. *In the Church of St. Thomas the Martyr.*

		Date[2]
1.	Randulph de Pidele	1269
2.	Garland de Ledbury	1287
3.	Robert de Bruera	1313
4.	Richard de la Felde	1325
5.	Thomas de Blotherington	1338
6.	Thomas Alyn	1338
7.	Nicholas le Smythe	1338
8.	Thomas le Clerk	1349
9.	William Martyn	1354

[1] From the list hung in the Priory church, compiled by the present writer.
[2] Date of institution, or, when this is unknown, of earliest mention.

	DATE
10. John Smythe	1362
11. Nicholas Bacon	1367
12. Henry Cantelopp	1385
13. Jerome Orchard	1424
14. Richard Hall	1450
15. Richard ap Griffith	1471
16. Richard Robyns	1499
17. Richard Gylham	1537

II. *In the Church of St. Mary and St. Michael, purchased as the parish church in* 1541.

17. Richard Gylham	1541
18. William Jermyn	1575
19. Edmund Rea	1612
20. Nicholas Garret	1640
21. John Ballard	1644
22. Henry Panting	1653
23. Richard Coke	1659
24. Richard Smyth	1662
25. James Badger	1669
26. Thomas Hassall	1691
27. Thomas Berdmore	1698
28. John Webb	1708
29. John Smith	1730
30. Thomas Phillips	1758
31. Richard Graves	1801
32. Henry Card	1815
33. John Wright	1844
34. John Rashdall	1850
35. George Fisk	1856
36. Isaac Gregory Smith	1872
37. Raymond Percy Pelly	1896
38. Anthony Charles Deane	1909
39. Arthur Linzee Giles	1914

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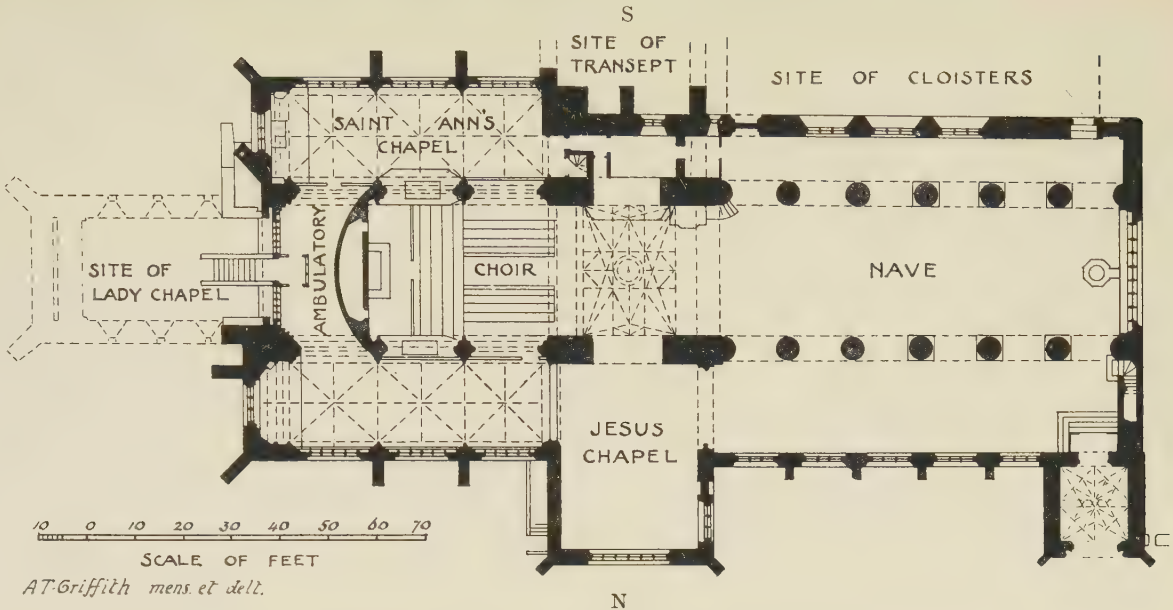
DIMENSIONS

(INTERNAL)

Total length on central axis	172 feet
Length of nave	82 ,,
Width of nave and aisles	64 ,,
,, ,, North nave aisle	11 ,,
,, ,, South ,, ,,	21 ,,
,, ,, Crossing	32 ,,
,, ,, Choir with aisles	72 ,,
Length of North transept	38 ,,
Height of roof	63 ,,
,, ,, tower	124 ,,

Approximate internal area 12,400 sq. feet



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